

## **ALLERGIES ARE NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT**

A recent study reports that the number of students with asthma has doubled since 2003. Asthma, commonly affects children and often is triggered by allergens in air, dust, mold as well as smoke and chemicals. Symptoms include breathing difficulties, coughing, wheezing and decreased endurance. It is also common for children with asthma to have allergies, in fact, there is sometimes a progression from seasonal allergies or environmental allergies to asthma.

Allergies are a sign that the immune system has been weakened and no longer tolerates exposure to parts of the environment that others don't even notice, cut grass for instance. Why would this happen? In my practice I've noticed that children are developing allergies earlier in life and there are more cases than ever before. There are many reasons for this.

Frequent use of antibiotics in the long run weakens the immune system. A sign of this is that over time, infections get more frequent and last longer each time. There are strong recommendations against giving antibiotics for ear infections and bronchitis but many physicians still prescribe them. Antibiotics are sometimes prescribed for acne and given for several months. There are antibiotics in meat, milk and other dairy foods.

Most children eat way too much sugar and drink soda instead of water or milk. Processed sugar has no nutritive value but also weakens the immune system. Poor nutrition in the schools adds to the decline in overall health. In addition there has been a trend in the schools to remove physical education classes from the everyday curriculum. This contributes to overweight children which increases the likelihood of many diseases, including asthma.

### **So what can you do?**

- Take control of your child's nutrition. Buy organic foods whenever possible. There are no antibiotics in organic meat or milk.
- Teach your kids to drink water, not soda.
- Buy healthy snacks like fruit, nuts or pretzels to cut down on sweets.
- Exercise as a family: bike, swim, walk on a regular basis.
- Save antibiotics for life-threatening infections. Investigate safer forms of medical treatment, like homeopathy which builds up the immune system instead of weakening it. Homeopathic medicine is one of the

few treatments that can actually raise the body's resistance so that there is no longer a reaction to the original trigger.

The rewards of prevention are great! So take a deep breath and don't forget to stop and smell the flowers.