

Play Dirty!

Talking Points:

Hygiene hypothesis 101: Historically, our internal ecosystem has depended on exposure to microorganisms for the immune system to develop. With the advent of modern hygienic practices, our immune systems are not able to develop properly, leading to a marked increase in allergies and autoimmune disorders.

Organisms that may be important for proper development of the immune system include lactobacilli, various mycobacteria, and certain helminths (parasites).

Researchers are even experimenting with using parasites to treat autoimmune diseases.

Autoimmune diseases and allergies are far more common in the developed world than in the undeveloped, including Asthma, Allergies, Multiple Sclerosis, Crohn's disease, Ulcerative Colitis, Graves Disease, Type I Diabetes, Celiac Disease and others.

In the 60's, a study in Israel found that children growing up in cleaner homes were more likely to develop MS as an adult.

People who have had measles have fewer allergies.

Children from larger families, have pets, live on farms, start daycare at an early age have fewer allergies.

Developing countries and rural areas have lower rates, and in some undeveloped areas, allergies and autoimmune diseases are still rare. In 1967 a researcher went to Ghana to study asthma and, despite searching for 3 months, couldn't find a single case of asthma.

Solutions:

1. Let your kids get out there and play in the dirt!
2. Quit using so many disinfectants and antibacterial products...and antibiotics.
3. Eat plenty of live cultured, fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, kimchee, sauerkraut – preferably raw. These foods have a high probiotic content.

Sample questions:

1. Can you explain how getting dirty can actually improve our health?
 2. Is this just another fad theory or is there some real science behind it?
 3. So, are you saying that we are actually putting our health at risk because of the very things we're doing to protect our health?
 4. What mistakes are people making?
 5. What can we do to reverse the health risks that come with our obsession with killing germs?
 6. Obviously we have benefited from advances in public sanitation; we don't want to go back to living in squalor. How do we balance the need for cleanliness with the need for germs in our lives?
 7. Where can our listeners learn more about playing dirty to improve their health?
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