

Leaky Gut Syndrome A Source of Chronic Immune Stress

Leaky Gut Syndrome (LGS) means just what it sounds like. The lining of the intestinal tract is no longer perfectly protecting our inner body from the foreign substances in the outside world. Remember, inside your intestinal tract is still outside your body. Things from the outside world travel from the mouth to anus through a long tube called your gastrointestinal tract. The function of the lining of that tube is to finish breaking down food substances down into particles that are so simple that, when absorbed, they can no longer be identified by your immune system as having come from something outside our body.

Your immune system sees the world in black and white: if it is YOU, it is NOT supposed to attack and; if it is NOT YOU, it IS supposed to attack.

The only way we have to take things from the outside world and make them into our own tissue (without our immune system going crazy), is for the digestive system, including the intestinal lining, to do its job VERY well.

Leakage of imperfectly digested proteins (peptides) and carbohydrates (sugars), through a compromised intestinal lining, is now known to be a common cause of food and environmental sensitivities. Human physiology tells us that the final stage of protein and carbohydrate digestion occurs in the cells lining the digestive tract. This is important because, in the case of proteins and carbohydrates, only amino acids and small sugar molecules should enter the blood stream. If proteins or large sugar molecules do make their way past the intestinal barrier, your immune system says, "Alert, foreign invader." What happens now is a so-called food allergy response. The problem may not be the food, but the fact that it went undigested into the blood stream.

We now know that many chronic conditions, previously listed as "cause unknown" are actually caused by immunological reactions to these incompletely digested proteins which respond by turning those antibodies against similar proteins that make up our various tissues. This is called "MOLECULAR MIMICRY" and can be a factor in the cause of some autoimmune diseases.

The intestinal lining replaces itself approximately every 3 to 4 days and, in order for these cells to sustain and duplicate themselves, they need a constant source of energy. Should these cells not get the nutrients they need; the cell lining of the intestines will become weak and fragile resulting in undigested protein, carbohydrates (sugars), bacteria, viruses, and even toxins leaking into the blood stream.

As I noted earlier, increased intestinal permeability or leaky gut syndrome makes the effects of environmental pollutants even more dangerous. Since humans have not had enough time to "evolve" a way to DIGEST the chemicals that have been invented by man, the main way they get into us is by "leakage". A leaky gut allows a larger percent of toxins to enter one's blood stream compared to a healthy gut. Not only is this stressful on the immune system, but also one's adrenal glands and liver.