

APPENDIX A

Cereal Grass and Allergies

Those who are allergic to wheat and other grain products are almost never allergic to the green cereal grasses. Allergies to wheat, barley and rye products are usually reactions to gluten, the tenacious elastic protein substance that gives cohesiveness to bread dough. The cereal grasses do not contain gluten. Their chemical profiles are like those of other leafy green vegetables, and unlike those of grains, or mature cereal seeds. A few people who are allergic to dark green vegetables or to a variety of grasses are occasionally also allergic to the cereal grasses.

Allergy-prone individuals need to take special care to eat a well balanced and nutritionally adequate diet to sustain their general good health, and particularly their immune systems. Allergies are hyper-immune reactions; when the immune system cannot tolerate an offending substance (the allergen), it mounts a defense against things which are harmless to most of us. This situation puts stress on the allergic person's immune system.

Little research has been done on the best ways for allergic people to counter this stress nutritionally, but the nutrients generally thought to support and enhance the immune system include vitamin C, beta-carotene and vitamin A, protein, iron, calcium, and the B complex vitamins. Fiber might also be helpful by diluting and enhancing the elimination of the offending substance in the digestive tract. Chlorophyll, with its general detoxifying properties, could also be beneficial in this regard. A chlorophyll derivative has been shown to inhibit allergy reactions (Types I, II, and III) in laboratory rats.⁹⁴

There is sufficient reason, then, to believe that increasing one's intake of dark green vegetables may provide positive benefits for one's immunological health. Those with wheat or barley allergies can generally consume wheat grass and barley grass with no allergic reaction, and provide their immune systems with the benefits of the wide range of nutrients concentrated in these simple green foods.