



An Epidemic of Absence: A New Way of Understanding Allergies and Autoimmune Diseases

By Moises Velasquez-Manoff

Scribner. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 416 pages. Dimensions: 8.3in. x 5.5in. x 1.3in. From asthma to Crohns disease, everyone knows someone who suffers from an allergic or autoimmune disorder. And if it appears that the prevalence of these maladies has increased recently, that's because it has to levels never before seen in human history. These days no fewer than one in five and likely more Americans suffers from one of these ailments. We seem newly, and bafflingly, vulnerable to immune system malfunction. Why? One possibility is that we have systematically cleaned ourselves of illness; this belief challenges deeply entrenched notions about the value of societal hygiene and the harmful nature of microbes. Yet scientists investigating the rampant immune dysfunction in the developed world have inevitably arrived at this conclusion. To address this global epidemic of absence, they must restore the human ecosystem. This groundbreaking book explores the promising but controversial worm therapy: deliberate infection with parasitic worms in development to treat autoimmune disease. It explains why farmers' children so rarely get hay fever, why allergy is less prevalent in former Eastern Bloc countries, and how one cancer-causing bacterium may be good for us. It probes the link between autism and a dysfunctional immune system. It...



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