

COLORADO

CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE

TUESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2008

Impulse Theater downstairs at Wynkoop Brewing Company

<http://www.wynkoop.com/>

Corner of 18th and Wynkoop in LoDo, Denver

About a block from Light Rail. Thirteen minutes by foot from Auraria.

THE HYGIENE HYPOTHESIS: *BETTER LIVING THROUGH DIRT*

J. John Cohen, MD, PhD

University of Colorado Denver, School of Medicine

The past few decades have seen a huge increase in allergic diseases like eczema and asthma, and autoimmune diseases like multiple sclerosis, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, and Type 1 juvenile diabetes. But the incidence is not uniform around the world: the inflammatory bowel diseases and allergies are less common in poor countries. In the United States and Canada, the increase in these diseases is seen in rich, not poor, communities; in the north more than the south; and in urban more than rural communities. This does not on the face of it seem to make sense! Why should people who live a "cleaner" lifestyle be more susceptible to allergy and autoimmunity? The Hygiene Hypothesis, also called the Old Friends Hypothesis, was formulated to address this seeming paradox. It says that humans have always had a gut- and skin-full of microorganisms and worms. We came to terms with these organisms, which gradually evolved from parasites to harmless commensals. In fact, they now serve to train each person's immune system not to overreact to harmless bugs. But when we started cleaning up our environment, we lost some of our Old Friends; our immune systems became unbalanced, and we now respond violently and damagingly to gut organisms, skin bacteria, pollens and even foods as if they were the most dangerous pathogens. *What can we do about this?*

EVERYONE IS WELCOME. The discussion starts at 6:30 in the *Impulse Theater* (no food service there). Come before 6 PM to leave yourself time to get something to eat in the restaurant upstairs, or stay and eat afterwards. We end around 8 PM.

There's no charge. The *Impulse Theater* and Wynkoop are generously providing the facility; we buy our own drinks. It is first come, first seated, and **seating is limited** by the fire laws!.

The Colorado Café Scientifique in Denver is organized by an informal committee of faculty from CU and institutions up and down the Front Range, as well as writers, students, and science fans from industry, government and all over. We welcome your input, including ideas for speakers and topics. Bring them with you to the next Café, or e-mail them and any questions to John.Cohen@UCDenver.edu

Essential information on our Web site at <http://CafeSciColorado.org>