



Dendritic Cells—Importance in Allergy—

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In this review we discuss the role of dendritic cells (DC) in the pathogenesis of allergic contact hypersensitivity (ACH) and atopic disorders, such as asthma and atopic eczema. In ACH patients, DC recognize the invasion of simple chemicals such as haptens, and trigger antigen-specific T cell responses leading to the characteristic histological and clinical changes such as spongiosis and papulovesicular eruptions. During atopic disorders, it is well known that the Th2-deviated immune response plays a crucial role in their pathogenesis. DC provide T cells with antigen and costimulatory signals (signals 1 and 2, respectively), as well as with a polarizing signal (signal 3). When studying ACH, it is important to understand how simple chemicals induce the activation of DC and their migration to the draining lymph nodes where they supply signals 1 and 2 to naïve T cells. The mechanisms by which DC induce the Th2-deviated immune response, namely via the Th2-deviated signal 3, are central topics in the pathogenesis of atopic disorders.

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