

Allergies are increasing in Britain

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A government review of allergy services in Britain finds that the number of people hospitalized for allergies has more than tripled in the past 10 years.

Most of the hospitalizations have been from allergic reactions to food or insect bites, The Times of London reported.

The review, published Thursday, noted an alarming rise in cases of anaphylaxis, a serious and potentially fatal form of allergic reaction. It was also estimated that asthma, hay fever and eczema rates have risen between two- and three-fold.

Food allergies were reported to be the fastest growing conditions. The report warned that as many as 18 million Britons may develop an allergy at some point in their lives.

The increase in allergies has been blamed on oversensitive immune systems, which can develop from living in increasingly hygienic environments. Other possible causes include an increase in the consumption of exotic foods.

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