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NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 25

Things That Summer Can Bring to Children from the GI perspective!

Hay fever season is particularly noted for worsening allergic conditions involving the oesophagus, defined as eosinophilic oesophagitis, which is a bit like eczema of the oesophagus. This classically presents with reflux-type symptoms or sometimes swallowing difficulties, especially for solid food. If this happens then it is best to see a doctor, and with the swallowing difficulties especially, a referral to a specialist would be necessary for further investigation.

Obviously, with hot weather the problem of fluid intake in children, especially younger children, can be an issue, and without good fluid intake constipation can ensue. The 3 Fs – "fluid, fibre and fruit" would be sensible to help improve bowel habit, and we would be aiming for a poo each day or every other day without any difficulty. If you are worried that problems are not manageable then contacting your doctor, and possibly getting some treatment, such as a mild laxative, would be important.

Food allergies can be seasonal, and with chronic long term constipation there is a contribution to the problem of around 40% of patients and children due to food allergy, especially cow's milk protein, and sometimes a dairy-free diet can be helpful, but contact your doctor first.

Coeliac disease can also present with constipation, which isn't widely known as it is thought normally to present with diarrhoea, growth failure or anaemia, but constipation is a significant feature of some children presenting with coeliac disease, especially if there is a family history. Appropriate testing and treatment would be necessary.

As with any symptoms involving nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain or bowel habit disturbance such as diarrhoea or constipation, contacting your health professional and, if necessary, contacting Professor Thomson, would be sensible if you are concerned. We are able to answer within a short space of time should you have any queries, especially if we have seen you previously.

Best wishes for a great summer before school term starts again!

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