

## **Abstract**

Food-related diseases, including food allergies and food intolerances, are on the rise worldwide. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), allergic diseases in the economically advanced countries of the WHO have become the largest child environmental epidemic. Dysregulation of immune tolerance is the basic mechanism involved in the development of food allergy. It is believed that the risk of developing allergies is more related to other lifestyle factors such as a diet, physical activity or obesity. Food allergies in children and adult populations vary both in the spectrum of triggering foods and also their symptoms and their severity. The prognosis also differs in allergies for different types of foods.

One of the most important factors affecting the correct development of the baby's immune system is nutrition. In the first 4 – 6 months, the baby should only receive breast milk - for infants it is the most appropriate and allergenically safe diet. It strengthens their immune system. Its positive effect is observed especially on the occurrence of food allergies and atopic eczema. However, developing asthma and other allergies may not be prevented. Breastfeeding has an extraordinary importance and benefits in preventing many illnesses for both the child and the mother.

Milk is a major food in the diet of most nations, yet there is a group of people who refuse milk for various health reasons or beliefs about its inappropriateness. At the same time, it is among the eight major allergens. There are many half-truths and myths about milk. How strongly our society is affected or whether we have correct information about milk and dairy products will be verified by a questionnaire survey. The aim of the work is to find out what knowledge the general public has about food allergies and intolerances, its opinions on the causes of the disease and its prevention and, last but not least, it focuses on verifying information on milk and dairy products.

## **Key words**

Food allergy, food intolerance, milk, cow milk protein, immunity. allergy development.