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# Book gives allergies the boot

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Drugs are not the first line of defence for an allergy.

That's the message an allergy expert is driving home to parents with a book, *The Allergy March*.

The book follows the pain and suffering of 10-year-old Nick. He has all the symptoms of a progressive allergy and as readers follow him on one day of his life, they learn about allergy symptoms, investigations, examination, diagnosis and treatment.

Readers also learn how to better manage allergies by taking preventive measures and how to identify allergy triggers.

The 28-page book, presented in a children's book format, and a complementary interactive CD are meant to be read, studied and explored by children and parents together, said the author, Associate Professor Dr Ranbir Kaulsay.

Dr Kaulsay, who lectures at Universiti Putra Malaysia, says allergies can be complicated but treatment and even prevention are sometimes very simple.

"Prevention is better than taking lots of drugs, so reduce exposure to allergies," he advised. "Early identification is crucial to stop the progress of allergies."

Dr Kaulsay, who is president of the Malaysia Society of Allergy and Immunology (MSAI), laments that even doctors are often unclear of the symptoms or best treatment.

The society carries out regular road shows to educate the public on aller-

gies, which, Dr Kaulsay says, is a serious problem in the country.

One in three Malaysians suffers from it, including eight per cent of children who suffer from food allergy or intolerance. By 2020, half of the population is expected to have allergy problems.

Dr Kaulsay became interested in allergies after one of his twin daughters developed severe eczema as a baby.

His daughter Julia was fortunate because he could identify all the warning signs and classic symptoms of allergy.

"If not for our intervention, she would not have the perfect skin she has today. I want to save other children and parents from this hardship and this is the primary goal of writing this little book."

Dr Kaulsay says by taking preventive measures, 7-year-old Julia outgrew her allergies and can now even take the food — soya, cow's milk, egg and wheat — which used to cause her problems.

The book was launched yesterday at the Ninth Malaysian Congress of Allergy and Immunology, now being held in Petaling Jaya.

Thirty-two speakers from Europe, Japan, Singapore and here are presenting papers on various allergies at the three-day conference-cum-exhibition.

A public forum will be held on Sunday from 1.30pm to 5pm.

Admission is free but pre-registration is required with the society at 03-40416336 / 40410092 / 40414990, or visit [allergymyai.org](http://allergymyai.org) or [xyzofaller-gy.net](http://xyzofaller-gy.net).



Prof Dr Ranbir Kaulsay says allergies have become severe but they are manageable. — NST picture by Mohd Said Samad

