

# WHY IMMUNOLOGY RESEARCH MATTERS

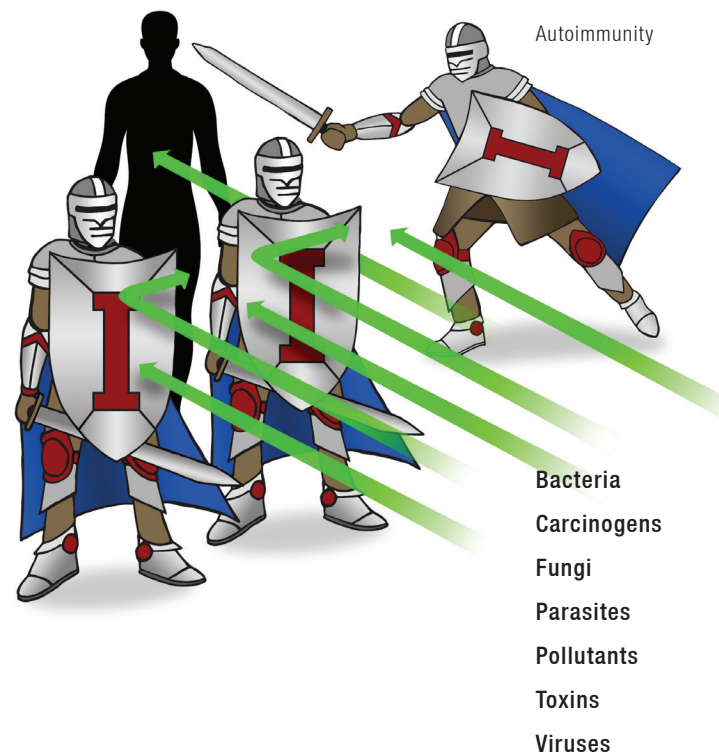
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## The Importance of the Immune System

The immune system is the body's primary defense against viruses, bacteria, and parasites that cause disease in millions of people every year. In addition, the immune system helps the body resist the development of cancer and other illnesses.

When the immune system is operating properly, it provides powerful protection against a variety of diseases. It can, however, be a double-edged sword. When it is underactive, it can leave the body vulnerable to infection. And when it is overly active, it can damage normal organs and tissues, causing illnesses such as allergy, asthma, inflammatory bowel disease, lupus, multiple sclerosis, psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes, and other autoimmune diseases.

Research scientists and clinicians are working to harness this powerful defense system to protect people and animals against naturally occurring infectious diseases, potential bioterrorism agents, cancer, and autoimmune diseases. Basic research focused on understanding and controlling the immune system is essential to discovering better ways to prevent and treat disease.













## About AAI

AAI is the nation's largest professional association for immunologists. Since 1913, AAI has been dedicated to advancing the work of our members — research scientists and physicians who are the world's leading experts on the biology of the immune system and whose discoveries lead to the prevention, treatment, and cure of many life-threatening and debilitating diseases.

AAI represents immunologists from every state and around the globe. Our members include principal investigators, staff scientists, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, lab managers, and other professionals who support our mission: to advance knowledge within immunology and related disciplines, foster the interchange of ideas and information among scientists, and promote a better understanding of the field of immunology.

AAI is the owner and publisher of *The Journal of Immunology* (*The JI*), the most highly-cited journal in the field of immunology. *The JI* has published novel, peer-reviewed findings in all areas of experimental immunology since 1916. AAI also owns and publishes *ImmunoHorizons*, an open access, fully peer-reviewed journal committed to advancing the knowledge of immunology by publishing articles that cover all areas of basic and clinical immunology.

AAI is a founding member of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), which is comprised of more than 25 professional societies and 115,000 researchers and is the largest coalition of biomedical research associations in the United States.

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