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# *'The Offensive Side of Immune Defences'*

by

**Dr Kate A. Fitzgerald**

*Associate Professor of Medicine, University of Massachusetts Medical School*

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**RDS Concert Hall, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4  
Thursday, May 19 at 7.00pm**

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Over the last decade immunologists have discovered how the immune system senses the presence of an infection. Several families of genes have been identified which recognise foreign substances present on bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites that are not present on, or in, our own cells. By sensing these foreign molecules the immune system gets started and, if successful, will eliminate the infection from the body.

This response is a very tightly controlled process and must be turned on rapidly and then turned off again as soon as the threat has been eliminated. In some individuals this surveillance system inadvertently recognises molecules from their own bodies and eliminates these molecules, thus causing considerable damage to tissues and organs and contributing to conditions such as arthritis and lupus.

Dr Kate A. Fitzgerald, Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Massachusetts, is the recipient of the 2011 Irish Society for Immunology Public Lecture Award. A leading researcher in the field of innate immunology and the role it plays in a range of autoimmune diseases, Dr Fitzgerald will illustrate what happens when the body's own defences turn offensive and attack its own cells. This enhanced insight into the reaction of the immune system to infection is significantly influencing our understanding of autoimmune diseases. This lecture, which is aimed at a general audience, is the next in an ongoing series presented by the RDS and The Irish Times, and is being held in association with the Irish Society for Immunology.

The RDS is delighted to extend dining facilities to all guests attending this event. Those interested in availing of a pre-lecture supper for €12.95, which will take place in the elegant surroundings of the RDS Members' Club from 5.30pm, should contact the RDS directly to book.

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*Admission to this lecture is free but advanced booking is essential.  
For bookings & information, please contact:*

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