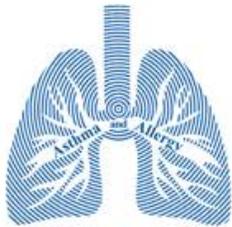


Asthma & Allergy Center

Courteous Competent Care with Compassion

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Asthma & Allergy News Fall of 2014

Greetings and welcome to the fall issue of the Asthma and Allergy Center Newsletter!

Fall! Warm days, Cool nights, College Football, Halloween, Ragweed —and for some, the start of a new allergy season! People who suffer from fall allergies also love the festive time of year, but hate the sneezing, sniffing, wheezing and itching that it brings. Not to worry, there is much an autumn-lover can do. Staying in control of asthma and allergies will help you make the most of all that the season offers.

Read on for information that can help you make the most of the season, and as always, all of us at the Asthma and Allergy Center are here to help and guide.

Don't Let Allergies Ruin Fall Fun

Halloween is many kids' favorite holiday. What about the kids with asthma and allergies, though?

“Many kids look forward to Halloween for the costumes and trick-or-treating,” says Michael Foggs, MD, president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI). “But you have to take into account kids who have food allergies, as well as kids with asthma, when planning your celebrations. There are very specific dangers they face, and prevention can go a long way towards keeping them safe.”

Trick-or-Treat Tips

Eats before Treats: Make sure kids eat before heading out, and remind them not to eat anything without checking it first.

Don't be Scared, be Prepared: Make sure to carry a cell phone, emergency epinephrine, asthma inhaler and wet wipes. Ask friends not to eat candy your child is allergic to, or to wipe their hands if they do.

For children with severe allergies, give neighbors “safe” candy or treats to give your trick-or-treater; plan alternative activities like movie nights or scavenger hunts.

Play trick-or-trade: Trade unsafe treats with trinkets or toys, like coloring books, crayons, or coins.

Dress for Success: Creating costumes at home is ideal for kids with allergies or asthma. Building in gloves, for example, gives an extra layer of protection. If purchasing a costume from a store, make sure to check for latex and

dyes that may cause a reaction.

Don't Get Tricked: Remind kids with asthma and allergies not to enter anyone's home. Triggers like pets or smoke can ruin a night of fun.

For more information about asthma and allergies, visit our Patient Education page.

Keep Tennis Balls Where They Belong--On the Courts

In many places like schools, day cares and community centers, it is common to see chairs with cut tennis balls over the feet to reduce unpleasant screeching noise. This seems to be a good solution, so what's the harm?

Tennis balls used to cover chair feet are constantly rubbed and ground, releasing latex particles into the air. These particles can be harmful, especially for those with a latex allergy. In fact, many school systems now have policies that prohibit the use of tennis balls as chair covers.

Using tennis balls in this way is harmful to people with latex allergies and is not a good idea. See an allergist if you suspect you may be allergic to latex rubber.

What You Should Know for the 2014-2015 Influenza Season

What sort of flu season is expected this year?

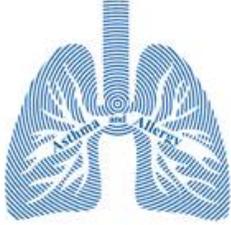
PENICILLIN ALLERGY:

What percentage of people who report allergy to Penicillin are found not allergic when tested?

[15 - 35 %](#)

[50 - 60 %](#)

[80 - 90 %](#)



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While flu spreads every year, the timing, severity, and length of the season varies from one year to another.

Will new flu viruses circulate this season?

Flu viruses frequently change, so it's not unusual for new flu strains to appear. The Center for Disease Control keeps track of various strains of Flu virus circulating all over the world and is responsible for "guessing" which three or four strains will go into the flu shots each year.

When will flu activity begin and when will it peak?

Flu activity most commonly peaks in the U.S. in January or February. Seasonal flu activity can begin as early as October and continue to occur as late as May.

What should I do to prepare for this flu season?

A yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older. You must get vaccinated soon after flu vaccine becomes available, to ensure that as many people as possible are protected before flu season begins.

In addition, you can take steps like staying away from sick people and washing your hands to reduce the spread of germs. **If you are sick with flu, stay home from work or school to prevent spreading flu to others.**

For more information about the flu, visit Flu.gov

Is Work Making You Sick?

Work related allergies and asthma are serious issues. Sometimes, though, it is hard to determine what the cause of the reaction is.

Poor indoor air quality from mold, dust, improperly maintained ventilation systems, or chemical fumes can cause breathing problems at work just as easily as they do at home. Conditions may be temporary, as with new construction, or a permanent hazard of your particular work environment.

If you think you may have work-related allergies or asthma, talk with your doctor who may recommend an allergist.

Track your symptoms daily and record the following:

- When and where do symptoms occur?
- Is there recent or on-going renovation or construction?
- Are ventilation systems working? Is airflow being blocked?
- Are there others at work with similar complaints?

Your Allergist can determine if you are allergic to something at work, and help you communicate with your employer about ways to reduce exposure.

Asthma Triggers and Management: Tips to Remember

If you have asthma, the airways in your lungs are usually inflamed. During an asthma flare-up these airways get even more swollen, and the muscles around the airways can tighten. This can trigger wheezing, cough, chest tightness and shortness of breath.

Common Asthma Triggers

Many people with asthma have allergies, which can trigger asthma symptoms. Common allergens include house dust mites, animal dander, molds, pollen and cockroach droppings. Your allergist can identify what you are allergic to and recommend ways to avoid exposure to your triggers.

Asthma is a chronic disease, so it requires ongoing management. This includes using proper medications to prevent and control symptoms and to reduce airway inflammation.

Asthma Management Plan

The better informed you are about your condition, the better control you will have over your asthma symptoms.

You and your allergist should develop a personalized Asthma Management Plan. This plan should include:

- Ways to avoid your asthma triggers.
- Clear instructions for use of prescribed Controller and Rescue medications.
- Instructions as to how to identify when you are doing well and when you need to seek help.
- A partnership between you and your healthcare providers.

Study Examines Severe Anaphylaxis in U.S. Patients

A new study looks at risk factors for severe anaphylaxis in a large group of patients in the United States.

Significant risk factors for severe anaphylaxis were: medicine or an unknown trigger; older age; higher score on the Deyo index of comorbid diseases; use of ACE inhibitors during the year before the reaction; and requiring an emergency department visit, hospitalization, or laboratory/radiology testing for any reason during the year before the reaction.

The authors stress that everyone at risk for anaphylaxis should be vigilant and carry emergency medications at all times. "Patient education is important to ensure that all patients, regardless of anaphylaxis trigger, are aware of their allergy and the importance of avoiding possible exposures to offending allergens."

Keeping Children with Food Allergies Safe at School

Every student at risk for anaphylaxis should have an individual written accommodation plan. A child's accommodation plan (Section 504 or other written plan) has two parts: the accommodations or services needed for the child to be safely included in activities, and the emergency care plan.

Talk with your healthcare provider about developing an Allergy and Anaphylaxis Action Plan. Share the action plan with your child's teachers and other school staff, including coaches and cafeteria personnel.

Allergies to Lupin: What You Need to Know FDA Consumer Update

ALLERGY:

What percentage of people who report allergy to Penicillin are found not allergic when tested?

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Lupin (sometimes called “lupine”) is a legume in the same plant family as peanuts. “For many people, eating lupin or a lupin-derived ingredient, such as a flour, is safe,” says Stefano Luccioli, M.D., a senior medical advisor at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). “But there are reports in the medical literature of allergic reactions to lupin, some of which can be severe.”

Lupin is often found in gluten free products. Those with peanut allergies or allergies to lupin, should read ingredients carefully. Its presence can be identified by looking for “lupin” or “lupine” on the label.

What should you do if you believe you are having an allergic reaction caused by lupin or a lupin-derived ingredient? (Symptoms of a possible allergic reaction include hives, swelling of the lips, vomiting and breathing difficulties). “Stop eating the product and seek immediate medical care or advice,” Luccioli says.

[Read more about Lupin Allergy here](#)

And last of all, permit us some bragging:

Dr. Kumar Honored as Keynote Speaker

The West Virginia Asthma Coalition selected Dr. Chandra Kumar as keynote speaker for its annual retreat this year. As winner of the Coalition’s [Lifetime Achievement Award](#) on behalf of the Asthma & Allergy Center for its dedication to treating asthma, Dr. Kumar is well known to the members of the coalition, and was wonderfully received by the attendees. Past keynote speakers have included representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and West Virginia Bureau for Public Health, national asthma specialists and environmental authorities.

Dr. Kumar spoke about the history of asthma starting with his first encounter with an asthmatic patient in his father’s clinic in India, as a kid, almost sixty years ago. He reviewed asthma treatments through the ages, particularly in the last fifty years that he has been a doctor, and connected the historic treatments with the protocols used today. The attendees said that the information Dr. Kumar delivered was especially meaningful in light of his long experience as an asthma specialist serving the Mountain State since 1979.

The coalition is comprised of physicians, respiratory therapists, members of the medical community, insurers, hospitalists, pharmaceutical representatives, state and local government agencies, education professionals, nonprofits and community members engaged in the fight against asthma in West Virginia.

With expert guidance, you and your families can enjoy all the activity that fall brings.

At the Asthma and Allergy Center, all of us are ready to assist you so you have a healthy and productive autumn this year (and every year!).

We all wish you a safe and wonderful Harvest Season!

Sincerely,

Chandra M Kumar MD

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