

# Asthma & Allergy Center

Courteous Competent Care with Compassion

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Serving West Virginia since 1979



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**We Want to  
Hear From You!**

Help us serve you  
and all our patient  
better. Please send

## Asthma & Allergy News

### Summer 2015

Greetings and welcome to the Summer 2015 issue of the Asthma and Allergy Center newsletter. As summer gets underway, we can't help but appreciate how much better it is since we count you as friends!

At the [Asthma and Allergy Center](#), we want to help you stay healthy all year round, so we've filled our summer newsletter with information we feel sure will be useful to you.

As always, our staff is here to serve you. Please call us at 304-343-4300 or visit our [website](#) for more information.

## Traveling with Asthma and Allergies

### Hotel Options

In recent years there has been an increase in travelers seeking healthy lodging, and as a response more hotels are finding ways to consider the health of their guests and the environment.

According to the [Asthma and Allergy Network](#), allergy –friendly rooms are now part of this trend. Those with asthma benefit as well from limiting their exposure to triggers that allergy-friendly rooms address.

Some lodgings have strategies to create healthy, comfortable environments for all their guests. Allergy-friendly rooms use mattress and pillow casings, air purifiers and more intense cleaning methods which remove allergens like dust mites and mold.

Need more reason to request an allergy-friendly room?

**Refuge from triggers:** Traveling exposes people to new triggers and having a space with clean air can help keep you healthy as you explore.

**Good night's sleep:** Whether traveling for business or pleasure, everyone needs a good night's sleep. Getting adequate rest and limiting allergy exposure is a sure way to worry-free travel.

When planning your next trip, consider reserving an allergy-friendly hotel room. Whether traveling for work or play, avoiding your triggers can make all the difference!

### Hospitality Helps

People in the hospitality industry, like hotel staff, take pride in making your stay as relaxing as possible. Don't be afraid to ask about an allergy-friendly room, or ask for arrangements that will limit your exposure to triggers.

#### Request:

- A no-smoking and pet-free room
- A room away from the parking lot to avoid exhaust fumes
- A room away from the pool to avoid chemicals

us your suggestions, questions and comments.

We look forward to hearing from you!  
[drkumar@wvaac.com](mailto:drkumar@wvaac.com)

### Asthma Facts

- 26 million Americans have asthma.
- 3500 deaths / Year
- 10.5 million missed schooldays / Year
- 14.2 million lost workdays / Year
- Direct Medical Cost (Medications, ER visits, Hospital Admissions) \$50.1 Billion /Year
- Indirect Cost (Lost Productivity) \$5.9 Billion / Year
- ER visits: 1.75 million / Year (most of them avoidable with good Asthma care!)
- Hospital admissions: 456,000 / Year (most of them preventable with good Asthma care!)
- Almost all

- A room without feather bedding or pillows

### Additional Tips:

- Bring along any special bedding you use at home
- If traveling near a lake or beach, request a room away from the water
- Inspect your room for cleanliness when you arrive. Don't be afraid to ask for a cleaner room.
- <http://www.allergyasthmanetwork.org/hotel-options-for-people-with-allergies/#sthash.nBNh64Jl.dpuf>

### Keep Summer Fun, Not Frightening!

Kids with food allergies deserve the same summer fun as kids without allergic reactions. To help your child get the most out of summer, work with us to develop a summer allergy action plan. List the foods or substances your child is allergic to and how to recognize a reaction. List all important phone numbers including parent's cell phones, local emergency room, our telephone number and any other person who can be counted on to come to the child's aid if parents cannot be reached. Have the child carry that plan when away from you.

Look for camps or activities for children with allergies. Many of these camps are led by health care professionals and can help your child learn more about their condition in a fun and engaging way. [Camp Catch Your Breath](#) serves children in WV.

Teach your child about allergy, what causes a reaction, what to look for, and if the child is old enough, how to self administer Epi. Include their friends and teach them what to do if your child has an allergic reaction and the importance of calling 911 in an emergency.

Keep all caregivers, coaches, camp counselors and teachers informed by providing copies of the allergy action plans and talking with them about what your child must avoid, and what to do if your child has an allergic event.

Stress to all friends, family and caregivers the importance of knowing what to do should anaphylaxis occur. Emphasize the importance of quick action and/or calling 911. Their quick action could save your child's life.

### The Emotional Side of Anaphylaxis

Eating is one of the main pleasures of life. For people with food allergies, though, danger lurks around every corner. For those newly diagnosed or those who have had a recent anaphylactic event, sometimes there is feeling of hopelessness about the situation.

A good way to stop feeling helpless is to take control.

- The first step is to get an accurate diagnosis. For more information, contact the Asthma and Allergy Center at 304-343-4300 or visit our [website](#). We will work with you to develop an Allergy Action Plan.
- Knowledge is power. Getting an accurate diagnosis and educating yourself about your allergy will go far to make you feel more in control.
- Find others that suffer from allergies and talk with them about the methods they use for control and management.
- Many people with food allergies also have asthma. Uncontrolled asthma can lead to more severe allergic reactions, so it is important to keep both conditions in check.
- Be prepared, not scared. If you have food allergies, emergencies can and do arise. Be ready by knowing what to do and how to do it. Carry all your medications with you, and bring extra when traveling.
- Being confident in your action plan doesn't mean you'll never have to call 911. Changes in the severity of allergic reactions can occur, and reaching out for help is important and might save your life.
- As part of an allergy action plan, keeping a journal is important. Bring your notes when you come in for office visit and discuss with the provider so necessary adjustments can be made to your treatment as well as the Allergy Action Plan.

Childhood Asthma and most Adult Asthma is due to allergies.

- Rescue Medications (e.g. Albuterol) are for symptom relief only.
- Controller Medications (Steroids, Leukotriene Inhibitors) suppress the allergic inflammation.
- Allergen Avoidance (dustmite control, Pet dander avoidance) decreases the allergic inflammation.
- Allergy Injections (and the new Oral Drops) induce immune-tolerance so that further exposure to allergens that cannot be eliminated does not induce inflammation.

**More Asthma Facts:**  
**at**  
[American Academy of Asthma Allergy & Immunology](#)

- Most of all, knowledge and understanding will help manage your allergy and keep you healthy.

### Epinephrine or Benadryl for Anaphylaxis?

Recently, [Allergist at the Allergy Asthma Network](#) was asked about using Benadryl (diphenhydramine) in place of epinephrine as a first line of treatment if an allergic child is exposed to an allergen. The Allergist's reply stated that treatment with diphenhydramine was the recommended treatment decades ago. With greater understanding of anaphylaxis, it is now known that diphenhydramine treats only minor symptoms and takes too long to take effect. "On average, fatalities from anaphylaxis occur 30 minutes after food allergen ingestion, and 15 minutes after insect stings. Fatal reactions can start out with mild symptoms then quickly escalate, and the vast majority of people experiencing severe systemic allergic reactions have only had mild symptoms in the past."

Anyone with a food allergy can experience a dangerous reaction, and delay in giving epinephrine can lead to hospitalization or in some cases, even death.

"I strongly urge using an epinephrine auto-injector as the first treatment for any sign of an allergic reaction to food. A dose of epinephrine for a relatively mild reaction does not harm a patient in any way. In allergy emergencies, it saves lives; Benadryl will not. And you certainly don't want to wait until a child stops breathing or loses consciousness to provide lifesaving treatment," the Allergist wrote.

[More information](#)

### What are the Symptoms of Anaphylaxis?

Symptoms of anaphylaxis can vary from mild to severe and are potentially deadly. Here is a list of possible symptoms that may occur alone or in any combination:

**Skin:** hives, swelling, itching, warmth, redness, rash

**Breathing:** wheezing, shortness of breath, throat tightness, cough, hoarseness of voice, chest pain/tightness, nasal congestion/hay fever-like symptoms,

**Gastrointestinal:** itchy mouth/throat, trouble swallowing, drooling, nausea, abdominal pain/cramps, vomiting, diarrhea,

**Circulation:** pale color, poor pulse, dizziness, lightheadedness, passing-out, low blood pressure, shock

**Other:** anxiety, feeling of "impending doom", itchy/red/watery eyes, headache, cramping of the uterus

Reactions may progress quickly, or occur, fade and then come back hours later.

**The most dangerous symptoms are low blood pressure, breathing difficulties, shock and loss of consciousness, all of which can be fatal.**

Conditions that may mimic anaphylaxis include heart attacks, anxiety attacks, choking and seizures.

If you or a loved one have any unusual symptoms, call 911 or seek immediate medical attention.

### What Triggers an Allergic Reaction?

Food allergies have many common triggers. Knowing your triggers for Anaphylaxis will go far to keep you under control.

- Almost any food can trigger an allergic reaction, but the most common causing anaphylaxis are peanuts, tree nuts (pecans, walnuts, almonds, cashew, pistachios, hazelnut, brazil nuts etc.) shellfish, fish, milk and eggs. Some food additives can cause an allergic reaction.
- Stinging insects like honeybees, yellow jackets, hornets, wasps, and fire ants can cause anaphylaxis.

and

[American College of Allergy Asthma & Immunology](#)

- Almost any medicine can cause an allergic reaction, including antibiotics and anti-seizure medications.
- Products made with natural latex contain allergens that trigger allergic reactions in some people. The greatest danger is posed when latex comes in contact with bare, moist skin.
- Rarely, exercise can cause anaphylaxis. It may not occur during every exercise session, and may only occur when exercising after eating a certain foods.
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With a little planning, you and your families can enjoy all the fun that comes with sunshine and warm breezes. All of us at the Asthma and Allergy Center are at your service to help you have a HEALTHY, HAPPY, ALLERGY FREE SUMMER!

Sincerely,

Chandra M Kumar MD

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