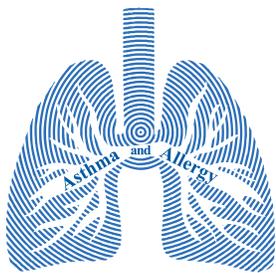


Serving West Virginia Since 1979



Summer 2016

Asthma & Allergy News



Our Providers

Chandra M Kumar, MD
Chang Choi MD
Siwat Kiratiseavee, MD
Melissa Gamponia MD
Tarun Kumar MD
Jenny Guervich PA-C
Jason Trusty PA-C
Krystal Smithers PA-C
Shane Wriston PA-C
Leann McKay PA-C
Jessica Dearman PA-C

We want to hear from you!

Help us serve you and all our patients better. Send your suggestions, questions or comments to drkumar@wvaac.com

[Our Website:](#)

Welcome to the latest issue of Asthma and Allergy News from your Allergy Consultants at the Asthma and Allergy Center.

After such a rainy spring and early summer, we are certainly ready to get back outside and have some fun in the sun! Before we start outdoor activities, though, we need to get ourselves and our families ready with the right tools and the right plan to take on our allergies and asthma exacerbations that sometimes come with the season.

Here at the Asthma and Allergy Center, we want to provide the tools you need to keep you and your family healthy through summer and beyond. Call us if you or a member of your family have questions or concerns about asthma, allergies or their treatment. We are here to serve you.

Summer Allergy News

Summer is for outdoors! But all that outdoor fun and activity also brings misery for people who suffer from grass pollen and mold allergies. Allergy symptoms arise from the body's reaction to contact with an allergen like pollen or mold spore.

Grass Pollen is the main summertime allergy trigger. For flowering plants the pollen is carried from male flowers to the female flowers by insects. Since grasses don't have colorful flowers to attract the insects, they rely on the wind to carry the pollen. Being an inefficient process, they have to release a lot of pollen in the air to ensure success. For example, it is estimated that ragweed puts out more than a million tons of pollen every fall in North America. Airborne pollen is extremely light and gets carried long distances by the wind. When people with grass pollen allergy come in contact with the airborne pollen, their immune system reacts, leading to runny nose, sneezing, itchy watery eyes, and other allergy symptoms we know all too well. In addition to the immediate symptoms, the immune reaction has a delayed component that extends the symptoms much after the exposure to the allergen ends, leading to sinus congestion, pain and headache for the next 36 - 48 hours. Allergy being an additive process, each allergen increases your response to the other allergens such as dust mite, cats and dogs that may not be bothering you on their own. Of course the reverse is true too - that if you have dog and cat allergy and you are constantly exposed to them, you suffer more when the grass pollen comes along as an added trigger. But you don't have to give up on outdoor fun, or your pet for that matter. A proactive plan of action will help you enjoy the most of summer, spring and fall as well as your favorite pet. You can get desensitized to most of the inhaled allergens. Later on in the summer mold spores

Summertime Allergies

Everyone loves summertime, but all those beautiful trees and flowers can come at a price for those with allergies. Some with allergies may experience the onset of, or worsening of, allergy symptoms. Some of the more common summertime allergy triggers include:

Pollen

Pollen counts begin high in the spring and lessen in summer, until around August when weeds begin to pollinate. Ragweed, the largest threat to those with allergies, reaches peak season in mid-September thru October, and stays on until frost kills it, around Thanksgiving time.

Mold

Molds are a very common cause of allergy symptoms in the summer. Winds and changing weather can spread mold spores a great distance. Indoor molds can cause year round symptoms which are worse in summer due to high outdoor humidity and inadequate air conditioning. Mold growth inside the air conditioners in summer and humidifiers in winter is a frequent source of indoor exposure. Damp bathrooms, basements, crawl spaces and water damaged walls are common sources of indoor molds.

Insect Stings

Spending time outdoors leads to contact with bugs, and some of those are the stinging kind. For those with known insect sting allergies, using an insect repellent and creating a plan with the allergist, like carrying an epipen, can be a great way to reduce the fear of getting stung and the stress that comes with it, besides being a lifesaver in case you are actually stung.

Poison Ivy or Sunscreen

The most common plant allergens that cause summer skin rash, or Contact dermatitis, are poison ivy, poison oak and sumac. Since almost everyone becomes allergic to them after one or more contact with their leaf juice, we all need to learn to recognize these ubiquitous plants. [You can see their pictures and learn more about the problem here.](#)

become a major trigger of allergies. You can read more about mold allergy as well as many other subjects related to Allergies and Asthma on the Patient Education page of our website. (See side panel on the left)

Summer Vacation Tips for Those with Asthma and Allergies

Tip #1: Don't forget your meds!

Summer might seem like a good time to take a break from your asthma medications, but just because you are not having symptoms does not mean your asthma has gone away. Studies show that going without controller medication in the summer puts you at much higher risk of having a serious attack when the season changes.

Tip #2: Triggers are hiding inside!

Everyone knows that outdoor activities, especially in pollen season, can cause an asthma attack. What many don't know, however, is that exposure to indoor allergens like pet dander and dust create more severe allergy symptoms. Talk with your provider to plan a course of action in response to indoor allergens.

Tip #3: Use Good Sense!

We all need time to adapt to extremely hot weather, especially those of us with asthma. Use caution when exercising or working outdoors. Drinking plenty of water, take frequent breaks and wear light, loose clothing. Most importantly, follow the medication regimen your provider has advised, and make priming for hot weather part of your asthma action plan.

Common Asthma Warnings Overlooked: Lack of Awareness Prevents Patients with Adult-Onset Asthma From Seeking Treatment

Most adults are aware of common asthma symptoms like wheezing and shortness of breath, but fail to recognize others such as chest pain or persistent cough, says a new study from [National Jewish Health](#). These findings may explain why many adults do not realize they have asthma or seek out treatment.

Adult-onset asthma may present with less traditional symptoms, making diagnosis and treatment more difficult. To test this theory, a telephone survey was conducted to over 1,000 adults age 18 or over in the United States. The participants were asked the following question, with affirmative answers represented:

Which of the following are symptoms of adult onset asthma?

- Shortness of breath: 89%
- Wheezing: 85%
- Persistent cough: 65%
- Chest pain: 54%
- Trouble sleeping: 51%

The survey showed the need to raise awareness of symptoms of adult-onset asthma. Adults who have symptoms such as the ones listed should speak with their healthcare provider and consider working with an asthma specialist. With proper care and management, asthma can be kept under control.

Asthma in History: Who Discovered Asthma?

In most cultures throughout history, there are many examples of the study of breathing, and finding the causes of breathlessness. The earliest mention is from 2700 BC, when the First Emperor of China (and founder of Chinese medicine) Shen-Nung, recorded remedies for physical ailments, including those of the chest. Also the first known herbalist, he recorded the efficacy of certain plants for the treatment of numerous conditions.

One of the plants is ma huang, the source of a medicine used today in the treatment of asthma: ephedrine. The treatment was called "coughing up" and was used in China for centuries to treat cough and respiratory issues.

To the ancient Chinese, breathlessness was caused by disorder in the body's yin-yang

Contact allergies to contents of Sunscreen are less common and occur mostly due to fragrances or preservatives. Most sunscreens are hypoallergenic, so make sure to check the label. We can skin test you for allergies to common allergenic chemicals found in sunscreens and other cosmetics. The procedure is called Patch Testing.

Seasonal Fruit

Some people can have an allergic reaction to “summer” foods like melon, apples or celery. This is known as Oral Allergy Syndrome (OAS), and symptoms include itching, tingling, or swelling of the tongue or mouth. OAS rarely causes an extreme reaction. This type of reaction is due to cross-sensitivity to respiratory allergies to pollens. For example ragweed allergy can cause OAS from melons and birch pollen allergy can cause symptoms from apples

Source: [American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology \(ACAAI\)](#)

Are Children with Nut Allergies at Risk for Exposure While Outdoors?

Studies show no significant risk for children with nut allergies engaging in activities close to the tree or nuts that have fallen to the ground. Most allergic reactions to inhaled exposure occur when indoors, like when food with nuts is cooking, or peanut shells are left on the floor in restaurants. The risk decreases outdoors unless the nuts are handled directly or ingested.

Source: [American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology](#)

Could I Be Allergic to Smoke

balance, and relief could be found only by restoring that balance. The ancient Chinese concept of chi states that health and wellness are controlled by the flow of energy, or life force. For centuries, traditional Chinese medicine advocated treating asthma with “restoring the balance” of the body.

Source: *Breath of Life, an Exhibition, March 23, 1999-March 28, 2001*. NLM, NIH, USDHHS.

Allergen Immuno-Therapy (AIT) Found to Pose No Risk of Infection

“AIT is truly a disease-modifying treatment that diminishes the intensity, frequency and severity of symptoms, as well as reducing the need for medications. There are no equivalent therapies for allergic diseases – including seasonal allergies, asthma, and potentially life-threatening hypersensitivity to insect stings,” says Long, who is an Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. “While there was no evidence in the literature to suggest that a problem existed, but we wanted to look at a larger data set to confirm the widely held belief in the lack of infectious problems related to AIT.”

[A team of Massachusetts General Hospital \(MGH\) investigators has found no evidence of infections related to administration of allergy immunotherapy](#), the common practice of injecting minimal quantities of allergens beneath the skin to reduce the allergic response. Although there has never been a concern about the sterility of the preparations used in “allergy shots,” the organization that sets standards for the quality and safety of medications and other products has proposed revised guidelines that place allergen immunotherapy (AIT) in the same category as more risky preparations intended for intravenous or spinal administration.

“Our analysis of 10 years of data from large allergy practices at Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women’s Hospital – covering approximately 135,000 individual injections administered to about 3,250 patients – finds no incidence of infection related to those injections,” says Aidan Long, MD, clinical director of the Allergy and Clinical Immunology Unit in the MGH Division of Rheumatology, Allergy and Immunology and senior author of the report published online in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*. “This confirms that the sterile practices used in the preparation of allergy shots at our hospitals and at most clinical allergy practices do not pose an infectious risk for patients.”

With a little planning, you and your family can enjoy all the fun that comes with Warm Weather and the Great Outdoors.

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

Asthma & Allergy Center

208 MacCorkle Ave SE

Charleston WV 25314

(304) 343-4300

Charleston WV, Beckley WV, Logan WV, Ripley WV

and Parkersburg WV (also serving Marietta OH and Belpre OH)

[ASTHMAWEB.COM](#)