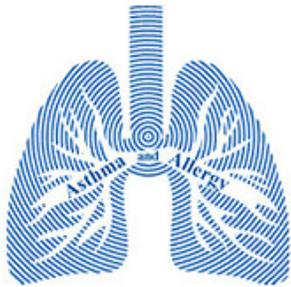

Asthma & Allergy Center

Courteous Competent Care with Compassion

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Serving West Virginia since 1979



*Greetings From Dr. Kumar
And All of Us at the
Asthma and Allergy Center.*

*And Welcome to our Newsletter, a
Quarterly Update on What is New
or Important in Asthma and
Allergies.*

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Asthma & Allergy News

Winter of 2013-14 Newsletter

Greetings from the Doctors and Staff of Asthma and Allergy Center, and welcome to our newsletter, an update on what is new and important in asthma and allergies!

The following information has been specially selected to address issues that may arise during the winter season. For more information, visit patient education page of our website Asthmaweb.com

And as always, we wish you all the health and happiness the season brings!

SEASONAL ALLERGY NEWS:

What Causes Winter Allergies?

During the winter, some allergy sufferers receive a welcome break from sniffing and sneezing. For others, though, spending all that time indoors causes new problems to occur.

In homes, schools and workplaces, minute pieces of dust and debris build up in unused air vents. When the furnace kicks on during the first cold snap, the debris flies into the air and, into the airways.

When this happens, reactions are similar to those one might suffer during

Important Anaphylaxis News:

There are now a number of different Epinephrine auto injectors in the market, including generic ones.

Please make sure that the patient and others who are likely to have to administer the injection in and emergency know how to use the type they got from the pharmacy. Take the injector with you when you see your doctor to ensure you learn how and when to use it.

[Our Website](#)

We Want to Hear From You!
Help us serve you better.
Please send us your comments, suggestions and questions. We look forward to hearing from you.
Our Email address:
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SUBLINGUAL IMMUNOTHERAPY (SLIT):

Oral administration of Grass Allergens for treatment of Upper Respiratory Allergies finally won FDA approval in Dec 2013, thus validating the concept of Sublingual Immunotherapy or SLIT. This form

of treatment has been the standard treatment in European countries for many years. FDA wanted to see more definitive proofs that the concept really works before it would approve it. FDA's panel of experts was finally convinced that these allergens did reduce the allergic sensitivity as well when administered sublingually as when injected.

Hurray! Now we can hope that our children, well maybe grandchildren, will not need allergy shots to cure their allergies but will be able to take pills or drops.

Ask Us for more details about Sublingual immunotherapy (SLIT) at your next visit, or see our website [patient education page](#).

other allergy seasons. Symptoms include:

- Itchy, Watery Eyes
- Runny Nose and Sneezing
- Cough, Wheezing , Asthma
- Dark Circles Under the Eyes
- Sinus Congestion

Combating Indoor Allergies

Get Rid of Mold

Mold grows in warm, damp places like bathrooms. To reduce exposure, make sure the bathrooms and areas under the sinks dry after use. And throw away anything that has mold on it. For things that can't be thrown away, wash down with a mixture of 1 gallon hot water, ½ cup bleach and a teaspoon of liquid laundry detergent.

Limit Dust

Use an electronic HEPA air filter for the bedroom, or instal a whole house electronic filter on the furnace.

Change furnace filters every thirty days. Wipe down surfaces and vacuum carpets every week. Use HEPA filters on the vacuum cleaners.

To help control dust mites, wash bedsheets and pillow covers in hot water weekly. If you use a humidifier, make sure you keep the humidity levels below 50%. Dustmites and Molds love humidity levels above 60%!

Pets

In freezing temperatures, pets need to come inside, too.

To limit exposure, bathe the pet weekly and keep it out of sleeping areas.

Improving the indoor air quality will go a long way to limit your allergy symptoms.

Alcohol and Allergies

“Eat, drink, and be merry” is holiday tradition. Generally, hosts are mindful of the foods that they prepare for others, asking guests about any food allergies before their arrival.

An often forgotten question, though, is “Are you allergic to alcohol?”

While adverse reactions are rare, allergies to other stuff in alcohol can cause

While adverse reactions are rare, allergies to other stuff in alcohol can cause symptoms that range from minor itching to asthma attacks or deadly anaphylaxis. These reactions can result from content such as barley, wheat or yeast in the beverage. It may also be as a result of the processing, where filtering agents such as egg whites and preservatives like sulfites are introduced.

Some persons have a deficiency of the enzyme necessary to metabolize alcohol. Therefore they have low tolerance, and increased toxicity from alcohol.

Compounding that concern is that many who drink during the holidays do not partake during other times of the year. This can result in the perfect storm of not just one novel allergen, but many. While each reaction on its own might be mild, by mixing that allergen with alcohol, the effect and its severity is unknown.

The best course of action is to identify the trigger. If one has an adverse reaction to alcohol on one or more occasions, avoidance of alcohol in all forms, whether it be rum-raisin ice cream or eggnog, is necessary.

Combat Winter Asthma Complications

With asthma and allergies, the best defense is a good offense!

For some, asthma attacks occur more often in the winter. This is due to the increased time spent indoors, and the cold temperatures outside.

Another winter concern is the onset of flu and pneumonia season. Those with lungs that are already compromised can develop a severe respiratory event very quickly.

The best way to combat these issues is to be proactive. Know your triggers and avoid them; get the flu and pneumonia shots, take your prescribed asthma meds regularly and develop an Asthma Action Plan with the help of your allergy doctor.

Tips for Children

Kids can help take control of their asthma.

Winter is an exciting time for kids, and those with asthma are no different.

To allow a child to become more independent, teach them to recognize and avoid their asthma and allergy triggers, follow their asthma action plan and make sure they learn how to manage their asthma as soon as they are old enough to do so.

Talk about the Asthma Action Plan with the child, the school nurse, the home room teacher and the PE teacher. Reinforce the importance of properly using medication as prescribed in that plan. Regularly check for feedback from them about your child's asthma and allergy symptoms at school.

Flu and Pneumonia Shots

It's not too late to get protected!

After the first of the year, some may think that it is too late, but the threat of flu lasts until the spring. While the full protection from these shots takes three to four weeks, it starts as early as a week after the shot. So it is not too late to get the flu shot even by mid March.

For those with allergies and asthma, it is vital to get the flu and/or pneumonia vaccine. When resistance is weakened, chances increase that episodes will become more severe.

The Centers for Disease Control reports that flu season can last from October to March, with activity peaking in January and February.

Flu, Cold or Allergies?

To determine if symptoms are from cold, flu or allergies, the following information may be useful:

Duration:

- A cold usually does not last longer than 10 days.
- Allergies can last for weeks or even months if untreated.

Symptoms:

While sneezing and sniffing are common to both conditions, those with flu or colds usually experience fever and body aches, which are not common to allergies.

If symptoms last longer than 7-10 days or seem to worsen, especially if breathing becomes impaired, seek medical assistance.

If allergies are determined to be the culprit, an allergist will perform tests to figure out the allergies and design a treatment plan.

Increase in Food and Skin Allergies Among Children

The prevalence of food and skin allergies among children younger than 18 years has increased since the late 1990s, according to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

Between 1997 to 1999 and 2009 to 2011, the prevalence of food allergies increased from 3.4% to 5.1% and skin allergy prevalence increased from

7.4% to 12.5% among children and teens up to age 17 years. Respiratory allergies such as hay fever were the most common type in children, with a stable 17% prevalence rate during the same period.

Team Up to Prevent Allergic Reactions

A recent study funded by the National Institute of Health has found that young children with food allergies experience reactions much more than originally thought.

Findings from the study also concluded that even when it is known that some reactions may be life-threatening, caregivers are uncertain about giving the child epinephrine to reverse symptoms.

These conclusions reinforce the importance of the team approach to care, giving the doctor, caregiver and patient an open dialogue to talk about triggers, reactions and appropriate management.

Starting a New Exercise Program

New Year will be here soon, and many will make the resolution to exercise regularly. Physical activity is important for everyone, including those with asthma and allergies.

Most with well controlled asthma and allergies are fine to exercise, but should refrain from activities if asthma is poorly controlled or during acute exacerbation.

No one should push beyond their physical activity limits.

When beginning a new exercise program, it is a good idea to speak with your physician and develop a plan.

Can symptoms during exercise be prevented?

Depending on the symptoms, medication may be recommended before commencing exercise. For example, persons with asthma may need to use the rescue inhaler as a preventive. Or the allergist may advise to time the regular asthma medication to maximize its preventive effect on regularly scheduled exercise.

Where one exercises may be just as important. Those with allergies to dust mites or mold may want to exercise in a room with a good electronic air filter, or outdoors if weather permits.

What type of activity is best?

For those with asthma, stop and go types of exercise are better than long and continuous strenuous activity.

Swimming has been determined a good activity for those with asthma, but use caution when encountering chlorinated pools as chlorine smell is a well known irritant trigger for asthma as well as allergies.

Sincerely,
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