



# The Wheezing & Sneezing Times

*Academy Allergy, Asthma & Sinus, P.C.*



## Reminders:

*\*Watch for the latest influenza activity in Indiana in our **Flu Watch** area located on the right side of our website.*

*\***Traveling** during the holidays? Don't forget to pack all of your medications including your rescue inhaler and epi-pen!*

*\*Be sure to bring your **new 2009 insurance card** to your next visit.*

*\*Make sure your **inhaler** is **CFC-free!** After Dec. 31st, all inhalers must contain the new ozone safe propellant called HFA. This will help protect the earth's ozone layer.*

*\*Provide us with your **feedback**. Click on the link at the bottom, right side of our website.*

## Eczema

At Academy Allergy, Asthma, and Sinus we frequently treat a condition called atopic eczema in individuals with asthma and allergies. Atopic eczema occurs most frequently in infants, but may also occur in atopic (allergic) adults, and is identifiable by three factors: 1) itchy skin, 2) "eczematous" or bubbly rash, or 3) an atopic (allergic) individual.

Managing the itch of eczema requires identification of its cause. This may include over-heating, sweating, contact with irritants such as wool, pets, or soap, certain foods, and even emotional stress in adults. People with eczema typically have very dry skin (even drier in the winter) and "allergic shiners" or dark circles under their eyes.

The goal of treatment is prevention. Applying cold compresses can be helpful and applying cream or ointment to dry skin is essential. All "irritants" should be removed from the eczema patient's environment. If a particular food is a known trigger, this food should be avoided.

Once all preventative measures have been taken, topical corticosteroid creams are the most effective in treating eczema. Less frequently, oral corticosteroids, antihistamines, and antibiotics for secondary infections brought on by scratching may be prescribed.

Stay eczema free this winter!

*Mandi Seger, RN, AE-C*

(Source: "Tips to Remember: Allergic Skin Conditions", <http://www.aaaai.org/patients/publicedmat/tips/allergicskinconditions.stm>)



## St. Vincent Medical Center North East

*We are now located in the St. Vincent Medical Center North East on State Road 238 in Fishers.*

*We are currently scheduling patients at this location on Thursdays 1:00-5:00 pm.*

*We are not administering allergy shots at this location.*

*Call our office for details or to schedule your next appointment at this location.*





## The Anti-Asthma Diet



According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, approximately 20 million Americans have asthma. The prevalence of asthma increased 75% from 1980-1994. With this high incidence, numerous studies have been done to find out what helps to control asthma. Some experts say diet can determine who will develop asthma and help to control the symptoms of this chronic disease.

### Maintain a healthy weight

If you are overweight or obese, you have just increased your odds of developing asthma by 50%. Denver's National Jewish Hospital recently performed a study on this subject. They concluded that being overweight is associated with an increase of the incidence of asthma in men and women. This suggests that asthma incidence could be reduced by interventions targeting weight gain.

### Eat a Mediterranean diet

A Mediterranean diet rich in fruits, vegetables, fish, olive oil, legumes and whole grains and low in meat can cut the risk of asthma. A recent Portuguese study concluded that "adherence to traditional Mediterranean diet increased the likelihood of asthma to be under control in adults. The study introduces a novel link between diet and asthma control, as measured by symptoms, lung function and exhaled nitric oxide".

### Eat good fats

Essential fatty acids are known to have anti-inflammatory effects. These essential fatty acids are most commonly found in fatty fish such as sardines, salmon and tuna. A major European study found that asthmatics that ate fish at least once a week had fewer asthma symptoms. (Eating more fish did not reduce symptoms further.) Those who never ate fish as a child had an increased risk for asthma and earlier asthma onset. Both indicate a possible threshold effect of fish on asthma.

Indiana University recently studied fish oil supplementation and exercise induced asthma. This study concluded that dietary fish oil supplementation has a protective effect in suppressing exercise induced asthma. This may be attributed to the fish oil anti-inflammatory properties.

### Lower sodium intake

Previous studies believed that a low sodium diet played a role in asthma. A new British study found no evidence that cutting back on sodium helps patients with asthma symptoms. It has been proven, however, that a low sodium diet helps to prevent cardiac disease.

Watch what you eat and you may just decrease your odds of developing out-of-control asthma.



Jennifer Mierau, RN, AE-C



### Points of Interest:

- ◇ Find out more about **asthma and diet** under the patient education tab.
- ◇ Ask your physician for a recommendation to a **weight management program**.
- ◇ **PARENTS:** Check out this website to help keep your children's weight in check. Look for "We Can" on the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institutes website:  
[www.nhbli.nih.gov](http://www.nhbli.nih.gov)  
Develop healthy habits now!



## Insurance Changes



It is time for many of us to decide about Health Insurance for 2009.

As you review your employer's options and try to anticipate your health care costs for the next year, here are a few thoughts for you to consider.

### Lower monthly premiums and higher deductibles

If you can save \$100 a month in premiums by increasing your deductible by a \$1000 your net savings seems to be \$200.

The monthly insurance premiums are deducted from your pay before income taxes are calculated.

Paying a higher monthly premium helps to spread your healthcare costs over a 12 month period. Deductibles must be met before insurance will pay anything. Paying large medical bills after the holidays can sometimes be a challenge.

Health Savings Accounts are usually funded at the beginning of the year and can help cover a large deductible.

### Major Medical Policies

A popular choice for individuals that were self insured is being offered by employers now too. A major medical policy has no office visit coverage. It is intended to cover individuals when hospitalization is required.

1. These policies are usually very reasonably priced. If an individual has very few medical expenses and can pay for those out of pocket, these policies may be a good fit.
2. If insurance coverage has been terminated and there is a waiting period before new employer's coverage will start, it is important not to have a lapse in coverage to avoid having a pre-existing clause added to the new insurance policy.

If you do make a change in your insurance next year, please be sure to *notify our office as soon as possible*. We will call your new insurance company and verify your coverage. Often employers negotiate new terms with insurance companies, but the policy itself does not change. The new benefits are only discovered when we submit your first claim. Be sure to read your new benefits book so you know what changes were made to your policy.

*Catherine Patterson, Office Manager*

## Food Allergies and Holiday Meals

From Halloween through New Year's day, the holidays are filled with foods to be avoided by people with food allergies. It only takes a small amount of an allergic food to trigger a life-threatening reaction. Certain precautions need to be made during the holiday season.

It is often hard to turn down that homemade dish during the holidays, but it is important to remember that these homemade items do not have an ingredient list. This dish could be contaminated with trace amounts of allergenic foods through contact with storage containers, baking sheets and utensils. If you are not sure, always ask about possible hidden ingredients.

Steps to take to avoid an allergic reaction:

- \* Inform the host about the food allergy and ask about the ingredients used to prepare the food that is being served.



- \* Bring allergy-free food that complement the food that is being served.
- \* Be sure to have your Epi-pen available.
- \* Remind family members and friends that strict avoidance is key when managing food allergies and even one little bite can hurt.

If you are unsure of the ingredients or are questioning cross-contamination, it is best to not eat the food in question. Avoidance is the best way to avoid a food reaction!

*Jennifer Mierau, RN, AE-C*

**Tracy Donahue, FNP**  
**David Patterson, MD**

