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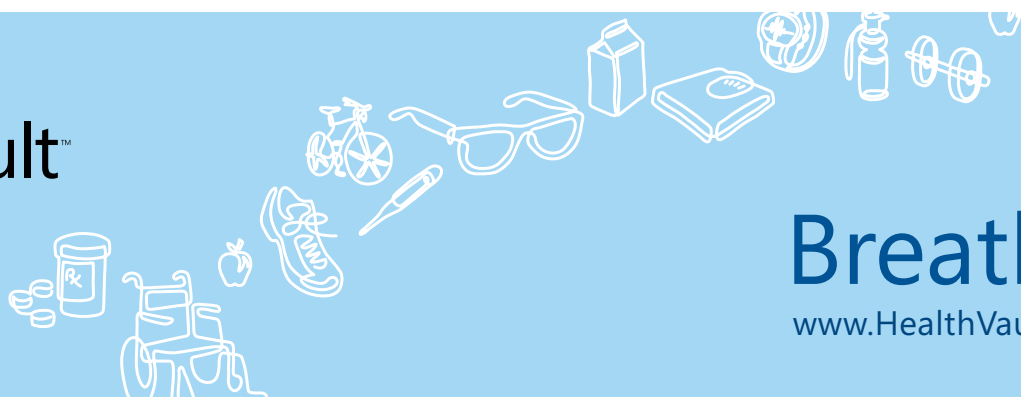
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# Asthma & Allergies

YOUR GUIDE TO BREATHING EASY AND LIVING A HEALTHY ACTIVE LIFE



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**ASTHMA & ALLERGIES**

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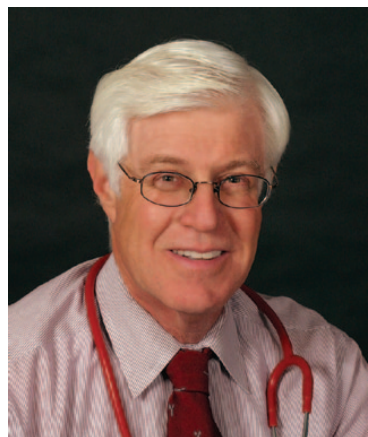
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# Proper Treatment Brings Relief



Mark Ballow

Nearly 20 percent of adults and 40 percent of children suffer from allergies, asthma or immune disorders. Allergists/immunologists and other healthcare professionals have made considerable progress in understanding these diseases over the last two decades. Yet, the number of Americans suffering has not declined. In fact, some of these rates have dramatically increased.

Members of the American Acad-

emy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) devote their professional lives towards gaining a better understanding of how these diseases develop and how best to recognize and appropriately treat them. This is why we at the AAAAI are excited to participate in this supplement.

Within these pages you will find news, research, advice and encouragement. We hope this information helps you make healthy decisions for you and your families.

Pet owners who have allergies need to understand the issues related to living together under the same roof. Unfortunately, there is a lot of misleading information on this topic. If you have a pet, or are considering getting one, check out the story on the myths about pet allergies.

Novel H1N1 influenza can cause serious complications for those with underlying chronic diseases such as asthma. That is why the Centers for Disease Control placed a priority on vaccinating people with these conditions. Given that influenza vaccines

are manufactured with egg content, should you take precautions if you are allergic to eggs? Should patients with immune deficiencies get influenza vaccines? You will find answers to these questions and more within these pages.

Global warming not only affects our weather but also potentially your allergies, especially if your symptoms are triggered by pollens or molds. We are bringing you the latest research on this subject. Patients who have noticed a connection between their asthma and weather trends may also be interested in this feature story.

As many as one in 1,200 children and adults may have immunodeficiency disorders. More than one half of these people may go undiagnosed or face the frustration of a delay in diagnosis. As allergists, the majority of our patients suffer from allergies and/or asthma; but our advanced training also benefits those who suffer from immunodeficiencies. Could your child's frequent infections be something more than routine illnesses?

Some Primary Immune Deficiency Diseases (PIDDs) mimic other conditions including allergy, asthma, or eczema—so evaluation by an allergist/immunologist is extremely helpful for reaching a diagnosis and developing an effective treatment plan.

You can learn more about primary immune deficiencies on the AAAAI web site.

The AAAAI is committed to educating the public and healthcare providers about asthma and allergic diseases, advocating so that our patients receive appropriate care and advancing science so you and your children are protected against the consequences of allergic disease. We are pleased you are here to learn more.

Sincerely,

Mark Ballow, MD, FAAAAI  
AAAAI President 2010-2011

## The Role Of An Allergist

An allergist/immunologist is a physician specially trained to manage and treat allergies, asthma and immunologic diseases including immune deficiencies. Becoming an allergist requires:

- Three years of residency education in internal medicine or pediatrics following medical school to become an internist or pediatrician
- Passing the exam of either the American Board of Internal Medicine or the American Board of Pediatrics
- Completing at least an additional two years of study in an allergy/immunology training fellowship program
- In addition, board certified allergist/immunologists have passed the certifying examination of the American

Board of Allergy and Immunology following their training fellowship

To find an allergist near you please visit: [www.aaaai.org/physref/](http://www.aaaai.org/physref/)

*A SPECIAL THANKS TO...*



The AAAAI represents allergists, asthma specialists, clinical immunologists, allied health professionals and others with a special interest in the research and treatment of allergic disease. Established in 1943, the AAAAI has more than 6,500 members in the United States, Canada and 60 other countries. This non-profit organization serves as an advocate to the public by providing the most extensive collection of online information on allergic disease at [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org)



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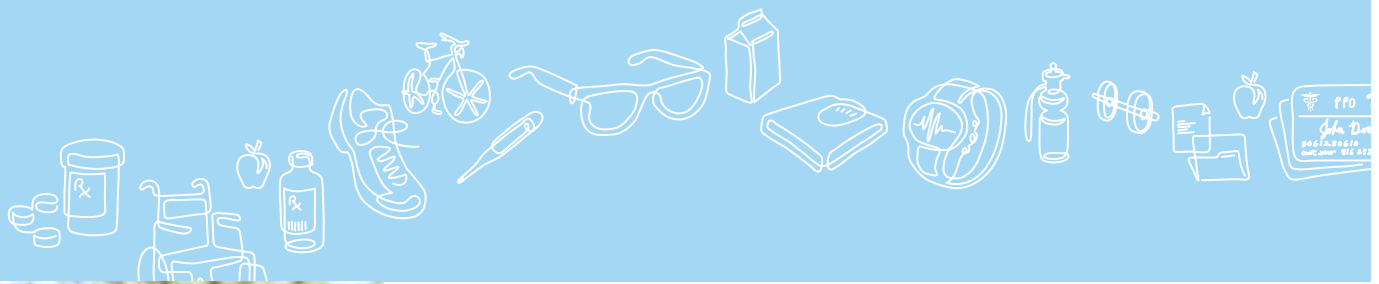
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- Track and monitor peak flow meter readings to control asthmatic incidents
- Be better prepared for doctor appointments and in case of emergency
- Learn more about triggers and symptoms

HealthVault is designed to put you in control of your health information. You can use HealthVault to store copies of your health records obtained from healthcare providers, insurance plans, pharmacies or employers; upload information from health and fitness devices such as blood pressure monitors, glucometers and peak flow meters; share information with your physician and other health care professionals, coaches, and trainers; and access a range of products and services such as PHRs, fitness and wellness applications. HealthVault helps you take advantage of health solutions to better manage your and your family's health.

[www.HealthVault.com/BreatheWell](http://www.HealthVault.com/BreatheWell)



## MAYO CLINIC HEALTH MANAGER

Asthma and allergy management doesn't end when you leave the doctor's office – it's a lifestyle you have to incorporate in your daily life. With Mayo Clinic Health Manager, you can take better control of asthma with the Asthma Control Test, receive personalized guidance from Mayo Clinic experts about triggers and symptoms, and be better prepared for your next appointment. It is a free online application and you don't have to be a Mayo Clinic patient to use it.

Powered by Microsoft HealthVault, Mayo Clinic Health Manager is a privacy- and security-enhanced application that can help you protect and manage your family's health. The features available on Mayo Clinic Health Manager can benefit various family members at different life stages and with different health conditions. The application provides specific tools designed to help asthma and allergy patients manage their condition and an asthma action plan helps track triggers and peak flow meter readings. It also lets you manage immunization and prescription information in one place.

It's easy to get started and, the more you use it, the more personalized guidance you receive. Try Mayo Clinic Health Manager today and experience the next generation of personal health information management.

[www.healthmanager.mayoclinic.com](http://www.healthmanager.mayoclinic.com)



## MEDICALERT EMIR

In a medical emergency, every second counts—and this is especially true for children who live with allergies or asthma. MedicAlert Foundation, a nonprofit foundation, has been managing and communicating critical medical information on behalf of its 4 million members since 1956. By wearing a personalized MedicAlert bracelet, children are provided with 24/7 emergency response and family notification services. If a child experiences a life-threatening allergic reaction or an asthmatic attack, parents or guardians and emergency care responders are notified within the first few critical moments of the reaction. Emergency medical personnel are trained to look for the MedicAlert emblem, which provides the child's personal identification number, primary medical condition(s) including any allergies, and the 24/7hour emergency response service number. A call to the MedicAlert emergency response service enables responders to access the child's vital medical information including emergency contacts.

MedicAlert's emergency medical information record (EMIR®) connects with Microsoft HealthVault so all of the data stored in your child's HealthVault account will be available & accessible to the MedicAlert 24/7 emergency response center in case of an emergency. Emergency responders will have the most up to date, comprehensive health information for your child.

[www.emir.medicalert.org](http://www.emir.medicalert.org)



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## MICROLIFE

Microlife's Digital Peak Flow Meter measures the function of the airways affected by asthma or COPD. The severity of asthma or COPD can change with time, so measuring peak flow at home is essential for monitoring lung function between doctor visits. Measuring peak flow allows patients to anticipate when their breathing will become worse and to take appropriate action before symptoms worsen.

Peak flow measurements can help both patient and doctor monitor the disease and is important for accurate prescription of medications in the treatment and management of these conditions.

One of the biggest issues faced by doctors when it comes to asthma monitoring is a patient not keeping accurate records. Microlife's Digital Peak Flow Meter records every measurement immediately, and is more accurate than manual peak flow meters that rely on the user to properly keep track of measurements.

The Microlife Peak Flow Meter works with Microsoft HealthVault, so patients and doctors can manage a patient's asthma and COPD. Simply connect the peak flow meter to a PC via USB cable and upload the stored values to your personal health profile. Providing your doctor with your peak flow readings will give them a more complete view of your health to help inform their decisions for treatment.

[www.microlife.com/products/asthma/](http://www.microlife.com/products/asthma/)



# No Such Thing As A Hypoallergenic Pet

Pets offer fun and companionship, but for some people a dog or cat can also trigger sneezing, sniffing, wheezing or other allergy symptoms. Does having an animal allergy mean a life without Fido? Not always.

**T**here is a myth that pet allergies are triggered by animal hair. The truth is that this allergy is caused by a protein found in pet skin (or dander), saliva and urine. Some dog breeds are labeled “hypoallergenic,” as they shed less, but no dog is 100 percent hypoallergenic—even hairless dogs still have some allergen. Each animal is different, and a particular pet allergy sufferer may do better with one breed than another.

If you’re allergic and want a dog or cat, consider looking for breeds with shorter hair and less shedding; although there isn’t real scientific

evidence to support that this will help. Some allergists have suggested that a dog that tends to keep its coat throughout the year may be better for allergy sufferers.

There’s no guarantee that someone who is severely allergic to pets will tolerate living with a dog or cat, but most people do not want to part with their furry friends. Immunotherapy (allergy shots) has been proven an effective course of treatment for some patients. If you do need to give up your pet, it could be four to six months later before you see any clinical benefit—and then only after repeated house

cleaning and removal of carpet, mattresses or upholstered furniture.

If you’re thinking about getting a pet, but have allergies, consider bringing the pet home on a trial basis. If an allergist has diagnosed pet allergies but you still really want one, ask your doctor to help develop a treatment plan before you bring Fido into your life.

“...but no dog is 100 percent hypoallergenic—even hairless dogs still have some allergen.”

# Eating Safely—and Well—With Food Allergies

BY: DEBRA GORDON

The incidence of food allergies in this country is skyrocketing. For instance, the incidence of peanut allergies in children and adults has doubled in just the past five years, notes Angela Duff Hogan, MD, an associate professor of pediatrics at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, Va.

**S**o what’s a parent to do if you learn that your child—like 3 million other children in this country—has a food allergy? “I stress to parents that knowledge is power,” says Dr. Hogan. “They should learn as much as possible about food allergies and the various scenarios their child might find themselves in that could result in an allergic reaction,” such as birthday parties, school outings and cafeterias. Her own son had food allergies, she said, so she used to bake dozens of “safe” cupcakes at a time, freeze them individually, then send one in with her son for classroom parties.


Parents should also learn to read labels, she said. One recent study found that if a label says a food was manufactured in a plant in which peanut-containing foods were also made, there was a 7 percent chance that the food

contained peanut proteins that could trigger an attack.

However, Dr. Hogan notes, it is possible to have tasty, nutritious foods without triggering allergies. Parents should look for foods that promise to be non-allergenic, i.e., they are produced without such common food allergens as milk, eggs, or nuts. Parents should also push fresh fruits and vegetables, which are less likely to be allergenic. The overall goal, she says, is to give your child as normal a life as possible—despite food allergies.

“...knowledge is power...”


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(after her Soy Latte.)



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# The Truth About Indoor Air Quality

BY: DEBRA GORDON

Here's something you probably don't know: The air inside your home and office is more polluted than the air outside. That's a fact that comes from no less than the US Environmental Protection Agency, notes Elizabeth Irvine, a registered nurse and the author of *Healthy Mother, Healthy Child: Creating Whole Families From the Inside Out*.

**"O**ne of the biggest issues about indoor air quality is that people don't think about it," she said. "But just because you can't see it doesn't mean it doesn't exist." In fact, she notes, according to the EPA, indoor air quality is actually four to five times worse than

outdoor air quality.

That's a problem for two reasons: We spend far more time indoors than outdoors; and the very people who would suffer the most from poor indoor air quality—those with chronic respiratory problems like asthma and allergies and other medical condi-

tions—spend even more time indoors. "Exposure to the fine particulates (in pollution, dust, pet dander, etc.) impairs breathing and can cause an increased risk of asthma, stroke, heart attack and other illnesses," notes Irvine.

Because you can't take a mop to your indoor air, Irvine recommends

you spring for a whole-house air cleaner, which functions as a kind of sieve for the air circulating through your house, removing particulates, dust mites, and other allergens. "By adding a whole-house air cleaner... to your home's heating and cooling system, you can remove up to 99.98 percent of the bad stuff in your indoor air to provide your family with a healthier and cleaner living environment," she said.

Other options include room air filters, which provide similar benefits on a room-by-room basis, based on the clean air delivery rate of the device. If

you have to pick just one room, says Irvine, choose the bedroom. Along those lines, aim to make your bedroom as allergy-free as possible by removing carpeting, curtains, stuffed animals and covering mattresses with allergy-free bedding.

Finally, she recommends hiring a reputable firm to clean your air ducts on a regular basis.

## The Virtual Allergist™

When you have health concerns, you want answers right away. While there's no substitute for the advice of a board-certified allergist, information online can provide a useful starting point.

**T**he Virtual Allergist is an interactive, Web-based tool that can help you understand what may be causing your symptoms. The Virtual Allergist will ask you to select the area of the body where you are experiencing symptoms. Then choose your symptom—such as sneezing, trouble breathing or a runny nose—to get information on conditions that could be causing your health problem. This symptom checker is run by the AAAAI, the largest society of allergy/immunology experts in the United States.

Visit [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org) and click on The Virtual Allergist.



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# Panel Of Experts



**SIDNA TULLEDGE-SCHEITEL, MD**  
Medical Director  
Mayo Clinic Global Products and Services

The dynamics of the healthcare system are changing as patients are faced with a growing number of decisions tied to their healthcare. That's why it is so important that patients be involved in their own health and wellness. They deserve full access to their medical records and medical information. They also need access to quality information about their health so when they see their healthcare provider they can come to the office and be fully engaged in the conversation rather than just being presented with information. But without the right support available to them, the information becomes overwhelming.

Mayo Clinic Health Manager gives patients the tools they need to become more informed consumers of health care and to take action that improves their health and wellness. It even helps them manage the health of their entire family. For instance, consider the teenager with asthma who is going off to college. I hear from parents all the time about how worried they are that their son or daughter won't use their peak flow meter, won't take their preventive medication. But with Mayo Clinic Health Manager, the child can upload health information online, including their peak-flow readings and mom and dad can access the information from home. So they can rest assured that their child is controlling their asthma well.



**JONATHAN BERNSTEIN, MD**  
Professor of Medicine  
University of Cincinnati, Department of  
Internal Medicine, Division of Immunology/  
Allergy Section.

Sinusitis is the general term that lay people use to refer to the sinus pressure they feel over their forehead and behind their eyes. They may also have increased postnasal drainage and congestion. In most cases, these symptoms are a complication of underlying chronic rhinitis, sometimes related to allergies, sometimes not. Unfortunately, there are limited treatment options for rhinitis and sinusitis. Antihistamines are relatively useless in non-allergic rhinitis, while decongestants don't work as well after several days of use and can lead to rebound congestion.

We conducted a study using a nasal spray containing capsaicin, the compound derived from hot peppers. Capsaicin works by desensitizing neurons in the nasal passageways, preventing them from releasing chemicals that contribute to the symptoms of rhinitis. We randomly assigned 42 people with mixed rhinitis (allergic and non-allergic) to either the capsaicin spray or a placebo spray twice a day for two weeks. At the end of the study, those using the capsaicin spray had much less congestion, sinus pain and headache than those who received the placebo, with no rebound congestion, changes in smell or other negative effects.



**ELIZABETH IRVINE, RN**  
Author of *Healthy Mother, Healthy Child:  
Creating Whole Families From the Inside Out*

I don't think people really understand how the air that surrounds them can affect their health. Indoor air "pollution," is actually worse than outdoor air pollution, as indoor air still contains the same microscopic particulates from pollutants, allergy triggers, etc. that get sucked deep into your lungs.

In my book, *Healthy Mother, Healthy Child*, one of my recommendations in allergy-proofing your home is a whole-house air filtration system. If choosing one room to focus your efforts on, choose the bedroom as we spend almost one-third of our life in. Create what I call an "allergy-free" bedroom. That means replacing carpets with wood floors, curtains and shades with blinds, and minimizing other fabrics such as dust ruffles and stuffed animals. Also, damp dust with a wet microfiber cloth, not a feather or even a microfiber duster. And use a protective allergy cover on mattress, wash bedclothes and linens in hot water—at least 160 degrees—to kill dust mites.

Finally, and this is a big one, keep pets out of your bedroom. In my research I discovered that 36 percent of Americans have dogs and 31 percent have cats. Their dander is a major allergy and asthma trigger, particularly cat dander because it's so sticky.

For more information on healthy living [elizabethirvine.com](http://elizabethirvine.com)

## Flu Vaccine Questions Answered

The novel H1N1 flu virus, or swine flu, is creating headlines around the world. With each passing day, medical experts and the public are learning more about this virus – how it behaves and how to treat it.

**A**n individual with an underlying respiratory condition such as asthma is more likely to experience serious health problems if he or she contracts either the H1N1 or seasonal flu, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI).

Getting vaccinated provides important protection, but what if you are allergic to a substance in the vaccines? And, are the vaccines safe for people

with compromised immune systems? As the H1N1 pandemic unfolded there was conflicting medical advice regarding these questions, so the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) looked to experts within the AAAAI for definitive answers.

### Egg Allergy

Individuals with egg allergy may be at risk for an allergic reaction to H1N1 and seasonal influenza vaccines due to the egg content in the vaccine

preparations. Notably, the level of egg content can vary from one vial of vaccine to another, but that doesn't mean egg-allergic people shouldn't receive the vaccines, according to James T. Li, MD, PhD. "An allergist has the expertise to safely test for allergies and administer the vaccine," he says.

### Immune Deficiencies

In general, there are two different types of vaccines: live and killed. The difference between them is vital for

people with an immune deficiency.

Live vaccines contain live bacteria or a virus that has been modified. This means they've lost their disease-causing ability or are administered by a route that prevents them from causing clinical disease. Killed vaccines are just what the name implies—the bacteria or virus in the vaccine is dead.

"The difference between the live and killed vaccines is an important one for those with immune disorders. Live viral vaccines should not be administered to patients with immunodeficiencies. This includes the live nasal mist vaccine," according to Mark Ballou, MD. "People with immune deficiencies should receive the killed vaccination."

Whether the vaccine is effective in preventing the flu depends upon the type of immune disorder. "Although the antibody response may be poor or low, the cell-mediated immune response may be a helpful immune response to the virus," said Ballou.

The AAAAI web site hosts a comprehensive library of resources on the novel H1N1 virus—especially as related to allergic diseases—including treatment recommendations, vaccine news, case studies and information for patients with allergies, asthma or immunologic disorders.



# Manage Your Asthma With Mayo Clinic Health Manager

Anyone with asthma knows how complex and complicated managing the disease can be. It often requires several medications a day at different times of the day to prevent symptoms; changing your environment to reduce asthma triggers; even altering your lifestyle to avoid attacks.

**“W**hen you have asthma you may see your doctor a couple of times a year at most if it's fairly well controlled,” said Sidna Tulledge-Scheitel, MD, medical director, Mayo Clinic Global Products and Services in Rochester, Minn. “The other 363 days you're on your own.”

But you don't have to be alone. Today, people with asthma and their families can access the power of the Mayo Clinic Health Manager. This free, online application not only helps you manage your medications, doctor appointments and lung health, it provides valuable information and guidance about your dis-

ease and its management that could actually improve your overall health—all in just minutes a day.

Mayo Clinic Health Manager is powered by Microsoft® HealthVault™, a privacy and security-enhanced online application that lets consumers store their personal health information gathered from providers, health plans, phar-

macies and other sources; upload information from home health and fitness devices such as peak-flow meters, blood glucometers and digital scales; and share their information with healthcare professions, family members and caregivers.

For people with asthma, Mayo Clinic Health Manager offers a monthly

asthma control test. Answer five questions about your condition, explains Dr. Tulledge-Scheitel, and you'll immediately know if your asthma is well controlled or not. You can also upload peak-flow meter results, as well as watch a short video on the proper way to use an inhaler.

Additionally, the application helps you develop a written asthma action plan, which the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program recommends for every patient with asthma. Studies find that such plans improve asthma management and control, including the use of appropriate medica-

tions. Unfortunately, studies also find that few patients have them, primarily because few doctors give them one. “With Mayo Clinic Health Manager you don't have to rely on your doctor for the day-to-day plan,” said Dr. Tulledge-Scheitel. “The application helps you develop it yourself and then you can share it with your doctor.”

The information, guidance and tools found in the application were developed by Mayo Clinic physicians and other health professionals, said Dr. Tulledge-Scheitel, and is updated regularly. For instance, during the H1N1 influenza outbreak this fall, people with asthma received special guidance about the importance of receiving the H1N1 vaccine.

“Mayo Clinic Health Manager puts the patient in the driver's seat when it comes to their health,” said Dr. Tulledge-Scheitel.

“Mayo Clinic Health Manager is...a privacy and security-enhanced online application that lets consumers store their personal health information...”

## Asthma, Allergy Symptoms Can Be Cyclical In Women

If your asthma or allergic rhinitis symptoms are worse during certain times of the month or during pregnancy, you are not alone. Research indicates that women's menstrual cycles can influence these symptoms.

### Breathing Cycles

**A**sthma symptoms can worsen a few days before menstruation, and hormones can play a significant role. Progesterone and/or estrogen can affect the airways or the cells of the immune system, making an asthma attack more likely.

According to one study, 57 percent of women with asthma experience worsening of symptoms and increased medication use and 14 percent had a significant decrease in lung function before their menstruation.

During the first two weeks of menstruation, estrogen levels increase and signal the formation of new blood vessels in the uterus and possibly in the lungs. As estrogen levels decrease dramatically before menstruation, the resultant change in blood flow in the lungs could make it more difficult for the lungs to take in oxygen.

During days 22-28 of the menstrual cycle, the hormones progesterone and estrogen decrease, reaching their lowest levels at day 28.

“However, hormones by themselves

do not explain the entire pattern, according to Richard W Honsinger, MD. “The use of oral contraceptives does not prevent worsening symptoms, and use of hormone replacement therapy in postmenopausal women actually increases the risk of developing adult onset asthma.”

Research regarding a correlation between menstrual cycles, pregnancy and asthma symptoms continues. Indeed, some females have worsening of their asthma during pregnancy. In the meantime, the American Acad-

emy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology recommends that you keep a diary of asthma symptoms in relation to your menstrual period and pregnancy.

“Also, talk to your doctor about increasing preventative medication before menstruation, or consult with your physician about how best to manage asthma during pregnancy. The most important therapeutic decisions during pregnancy involve maintaining appropriate oxygen levels for the fetus, and this revolves around controlling the mother's asthma,” adds Thomas, B. Casale, MD, AAAAI Executive Vice President.



**S**ymptoms of asthma include shortness of breath, cough, wheezing, pain or tightness in the chest. Asthma attacks can vary from mild to life threatening.

### The Nose Knows

Allergic rhinitis is the inflammation of the mucous membranes of

the nose. Symptoms include sneezing, itchy nose and roof of the mouth, throat, eyes and ears, runny nose, congestion and watery eyes.

According to a Practice Parameter in The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, there is an association of nasal congestion with ovulation

and the rise of estrogen during the menstrual cycle in some women.

Pregnancy rhinitis occurs without an infection, allergic or medication-related cause. The condition starts before the last six weeks of pregnancy (corresponding to 34 weeks gestation), continues until

delivery and clears up within two weeks after delivery.

Studies have shown that symptoms of allergic rhinitis increased in one-third of pregnant patients because of increased sinus congestion from the blood vessels in the nose expanding and increased blood volume.

As with all medications during pregnancy, consult with your doctor prior to taking or increasing dosages of drugs used to control rhinitis symptoms.

# New Research Suggests Link Between Climate Change And Outdoor Allergies

Climate changes may affect many aspects of human health, including respiratory allergic diseases such as allergic rhinitis (hayfever), according to a study being presented at the upcoming Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology.

**P**ollen counts, seasons' duration and prevalence of sensitizations for five types of pollens in the Bordighera region of Italy were recorded from 1981 to 2007 by the Allergy and Respiratory Diseases Clinic, DIMI, Genoa University in Genoa Italy. Over time, there was a progressive increase in the duration of some pollen seasons. Additionally, the total pollen load was progressively increased for some species.

"Climate changes are a reality, and they can be documented if long enough periods of time are considered," according to Renato Ariano, MD, lead author of the study.

"By studying a well-defined geo-

graphical region we observed that the progressive increase of the average temperature has prolonged the duration of the pollen seasons of some plants and, consequently, the overall pollen load," added World Allergy Organization Past President G. Walter Canonica, MD.

Results showed that the percentage of patients sensitized to these allergens increased throughout the years of the study, however the jury is still out as to whether longer pollen seasons actually put more people at risk for developing allergies.

"Longer pollen seasons and high levels of pollen certainly can exacerbate symptoms for people with

allergic rhinitis and for those who previously had minimal symptoms. This may cause more people to seek medical attention," explained Professor Estelle Levetin, member of the National Allergy Bureau Task Force of the AAAAI.

The National Allergy Bureau (NAB)

provides the most accurate and reliable pollen and mold levels from approximately 78 counting stations throughout the United States, two counting stations in Canada, and two counting stations in Argentina. The stations use air sampling equipment to collect airborne pollen and

spores which are then examined microscopically. This information is also used for research to aid in the diagnosis, treatment and management of allergic diseases.

If you suffer through pollen seasons, or wonder if your symptoms could be allergies, consult with an allergist/immunologist. To find one in your area, visit [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org). Additionally, you can sign up for personalized pollen count email alerts in the NAB portion of the Web site.

“Longer pollen seasons and high levels of pollen certainly can exacerbate symptoms for people with allergic rhinitis and for those who previously had minimal symptoms.”

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