



# The Wheezing & Sneezing Times

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



## Traveling with Asthma & Allergies

### Reminders:

\*Watch for current **pollen counts and ozone levels** on our website. This is located on the right side of every page.

\*The **Immune Deficiency Foundation** is offering a **family retreat** in September. Visit the IDF's website [www.primaryimmune.org](http://www.primaryimmune.org) for more information.

\*Save the date for the **2008 Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) annual walk**. Indianapolis will walk for food allergies on **September 27th**. Check out FAAN's website ([www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)) for details.

\*Be sure to carry your **Epi-pen** with you at **ALL** times!

Did you know that more than 650 million people in the United States will take a family vacation this summer? Are you one of those 650 million people? If you suffer with asthma or allergies you will want to read more. Whether traveling to the beach, out west or abroad, unfortunately your asthma and allergies will be going with you. We have found some helpful tips to remember when traveling with asthma and allergies.

Whether you are traveling by plane, train or automobile to reach your destination, there are a few points to remember. Eighty percent of travelers will use an automobile, truck or RV to reach their vacation destination. If you are planning a long drive, turn on your air conditioning 10 minutes before getting in the car to help remove dust mites or molds that are in your car's vent system. If you suffer from pollen or mold allergies, remember to drive with your windows closed and air conditioning on to decrease the number of these allergens in your car. If fumes trigger your asthma it might be helpful to travel early in the morning or late in the evening when there is less traffic and the air quality is better.



When traveling by airplane, it is very important to pack your medications in your carry-on luggage in case it gets lost in transit to your destination. Also, if you have an Epi pen it is important that you take it on the plane with you in case of an accidental exposure during the flight. If you have food allergies, it would also be a good idea to pack a safe snack for your flight. We can provide you with a letter called "Epi on Planes" if you are concerned about traveling with your Epi pen. If you suffer due to cabin pressure changes or are concerned about the recirculation of air on the plane, ask your physician about using your nasal spray or an oral decongestant 30 minutes before getting on the plane. Airplanes can be very dry, so remember to drink plenty of fluids. You may want to use a nasal saline spray once every hour to keep your nasal membranes moist.



When choosing where to stay on your vacation, it is important to keep in mind what you are allergic to or what triggers your asthma. When staying with family or friends it is important to know if they have pets or smoke cigarettes inside their home. Both can trigger your asthma and allergies causing for a miserable time on vacation and possibly an unwanted trip to the ER. Forty-six percent of those traveling will stay in a hotel. Remember to make reservations at hotels that offer smoke-free rooms and possibly rooms with air and water filtration systems. America's Best Inns and Suites is the first and only hotel chain offering filtration systems. If you have dust mite allergies you may want to request or bring your own dust mite proof encased pillow. Some people are very sensitive to cleaning solutions, dusting and vacuuming, so it would be helpful to prearrange maid services while you are out of the room to avoid those triggers.



Always remember to take a detailed list of the medications you are currently taking and the name of the physician who prescribed them. Pack enough of the medication to get you through your vacation and also a back up in case of a delay. If you will be crossing time zones in your travels, take this into account when planning your next dose. If you use a nebulizer machine for asthma medications, you may want to consider a portable one if you will be restricted by a power source or outlets. Finally, don't forget to pack your insurance card in case of the need to visit a Medcheck or ER.

The most important thing to remember for your family vacation is to have fun! If you should run into problems when traveling you can always call your doctor for advice. In addition, if you want to know what the primary allergens and pollen counts in the area you will be visiting you can check the asthma and allergy page on the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America website at [www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org). For a four day pollen count in the area you will travel to visit, [www.pollen.com](http://www.pollen.com) and put in the zip code of your destination. Safe Travels!



*Christina Kiger, RN, AE-C*

(Information for this article was obtained from the following sources: American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology website, America's Best Inns & Suites website, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America website).

## Making The Most Of Your Doctor Appointment

Have you ever left a doctor's office confused or unsure of what the doctor said or recommended? This can be avoided by careful preparation before your appointment.

First you may start a list of symptoms or problems you have been having. Be sure to be specific. The doctor will also want to know your medical history as well as that of your family. Thinking about this before your appointment can be beneficial. Next make a list of questions you want to ask the doctor. Add to this list as you think of more questions. Make sure to take the lists to your appointment. You also may leave a space after each question to make note of the doctor's answer to each question. When at your appointment, be sure to ask for any handouts that may pertain to your condition.



Keeping a list of current medications with you is always a good idea. That way each doctor you visit can find out any medication changes you have made since your last visit. If you have had any blood work, x-rays, or other tests done, a copy of the results would be very helpful for the doctor to get a complete picture of your health.

Many of us are a little nervous when visiting the doctor, especially when meeting a new physician. Taking a close relative or friend with you can ensure that you understand and remember what the doctor tells you.

Most doctors now have websites that you can visit in order to find out more about the practice you are visiting, the medical conditions for which you are being treated, and treatment options. You may also find links to other websites that can be informative. Visiting these sites will enable you to ask questions of the doctor that you may not have previously considered.

Make sure you know the location of the physician's office you are visiting, so that you can arrive on time or a few minutes early for your appointment. Arriving early will provide time for you to complete any necessary paperwork needed for your appointment. Be sure to take your insurance cards with you.

If you follow all these suggestions, you will find that you will make the most of your doctor's visit.

*Mary Jane Stella, Front Office Assistant*



## Ocular Allergies



One in five individuals in the United States suffers from ocular or eye allergies. This number is increasing each year. Common culprits of eye allergies include pollen and mold spores. The pollen and mold spores fly through the air and easily enter the eye. Those with sensitivity to pollen and mold begin to notice symptoms such as excessive tearing, light sensitivity, redness, dryness, itching and swelling around the eye. The symptoms usually affect both eyes. Treatment of ocular allergies includes oral antihistamines, eye drops and allergy shots.

- Wear large sunglasses to block pollens and mold spores from entering your eyes.
- Keep windows closed to reduce pollen exposure.
- Change air filters regularly to minimize allergens in your home.

*Jennifer Mierau, RN, AE-C*

### How to avoid eye allergies:

- Take your prescribed allergy medications as directed. If you take your medications seasonally, start them before your seasonal allergy symptoms begin.
- Wash your hands to prevent contamination with allergens.
- Avoid excessive rubbing of the eyes.

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