

Dear Readers: This is the free newsletter of the Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America, Texas Chapter. If you do not wish to receive other newsletters from AAFA-TX, please request we remove your address. To subscribe, email your request to info@aafatexas.org. Addresses are never shared. Thank you. Please add new sender's email (joanhart@aafatexas.org) to your address book to ensure delivery. Welcome SAFER Houston, a food allergy, asthma and allergy support group affiliate of AAFA-TX.

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IN THE NEWS: ASTHMA & ALLERGY

* Researchers have discovered a **link between menopause and Adult Onset Asthma**. The link is **estrogen**, a hormone protective of lungs and actively produced in young women of child-bearing years. Menopause reduces or stops the production of estrogen and this estrogen reduction could lead to asthma, especially for thin women. Women that are underweight are four times likely to develop asthma or allergies than women who are in the upper normal weight range. **Obesity or being overweight is linked to an increased likelihood of asthma**, though. Heavy women have more estrogen which some might think makes them protected from asthma, but **obesity is linked to insulin resistance which hurts lung function**. **Suggestion:** remain (become) active, maintain weight levels and discuss hormone replacement options if at risk for asthma.

* Every year approximately **150 people die from anaphylaxis** caused by **food allergy**. The 12 million people with diagnosed food allergies know they have to avoid their food allergens. They must read labels and be vigilant in restaurants yet sometimes food allergens pop-up in unexpected places. Many **street food vendors**, a common sight at carnivals, state fairs and community celebrations are **now using peanut or soybean oil** in their fryers instead of trans fats. Vendors are trying to improve health by eliminating the bad fats, yet they're unknowingly exposing some to serious food allergens that could lead to anaphylaxis. **Suggestion:** ask vendors at the State Fair and other activities the kind of oil they're using to fry their wings, corn dogs or snowballs.

* The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology reported that if you had (have) **eczema** as a child, this **might lead to hay fever and/or asthma**. Studies of people ages 8 to age 44 who had childhood eczema had twice the incidence of asthma than those who never had eczema. Many physicians aren't surprised by these findings since they support the "**atopic march**" theory: a child begins with a food allergy then gets eczema and goes on to hay fever or asthma or both. This is the first study which definitely links eczema to asthma. Treating eczema aggressively may not prevent asthma but usually treating hay fever does reduce asthma risk.

* Are you bothered by **sinusitis**? Traditional treatments include prescription corticosteroid sprays, nasal sprays or saline irrigation, all effective methods to open clogged sinus cavities so they can drain properly and not become infected. If these methods fail, surgery may be necessary to open sinus cavities by removing bone and nasal tissue, surgery performed under anesthesia and requiring several days to recover. There **may be another treatment for some** using technology borrowed from methods used to unclog heart arteries. A **minimally invasive surgical procedure**, a tiny snip under the lip allows the surgeon to place a balloon catheter into the nasal cavity. This balloon expands the passageway and allows excess mucus to drain from the sinuses. The procedure, which is approved by the FDA, is done in a physician's office under local anesthetic. But **don't rush to your doctor's office yet**. There is a question by many physicians that this **procedure could cause** nerve and tooth root **damage**. Most physicians would prefer to wait longer to see what long term effects might be for the 5% of patients who might benefit from this procedure. **Suggestion:** if you have chronic sinusitis, speak with your healthcare provider to determine the best option for you to open your sinuses and prevent infection.

* Are you trying to be kind to your body, to exercise more and loose weight but every time you venture outdoors to run, jog or walk your allergies go into attack mode and you feel miserable? You're not alone. In Texas, **pollens and molds are active 11 months of the year**. **Tree pollens** thrive January through June, **grass pollen** season overlaps from April to September, **weed pollen** season is July to November – just in time for the **ragweed** season which lasts from August into November or our first heavy frost. Besides pollens, many parts of Texas have very poor air quality and this causes breathing problems and allergy symptoms for many who are chemically sensitive. **Suggestion:** If you can exercise indoors in a controlled air environment, do so. (gyms, at home, Mall walking, etc). If not, try to exercise outdoors in the **evenings when pollen and mold spore counts are much lower**. Select an exercise activity that requires shorter bursts of energy rather than sustained activity. Avoid working out or exercising on carpeted or grassy surfaces, instead use mats indoors and look for paved paths away from wooded areas when running. **Breathe through your nose** rather than your mouth. Nose-breathing helps to filter the air before it gets to the lungs. **Warm up** at least 10 minutes to allow your lungs and bronchial tubes to also warm up and prevent constriction or tightening. Don't be afraid to stop exercising if you feel faint or have trouble breathing. If you have a cold or bronchial infection, **postpone exercising** until you're over these illnesses. If you have allergies and/or asthma, always discuss your exercise program with your healthcare provider.

Upcoming AAFA-TX programs: **1) Oct. 3**, 9-noon, "Asthma Management & Education" a continuing ed. program worth 3 contact hours for nurses, Oklahoma City, OK, Kathleen Conboy-Ellis, instructor. **2) Oct. 4**, 9-noon, "Asthma & Allergy Essentials for Childcare Providers" First Baptist Church of Melissa, Mudpies & Lullabies sponsor, Melissa, TX, Darla Theis, instructor **3) October 10** "Asthma & Allergy Essentials for Childcare Providers" Holy Family of Nazareth, Irving, Patty Carlton, instructor. **4) Oct. 13**, 8:30 am-11:30 am "Asthma Management & Education" a continuing ed. program worth 3 contact hours for nurses, Corpus Christi, Gwen Carlton, instructor. **5) Nov. 8** "Walk for Food Allergy: Moving toward a Cure" Bob Woodruff Park, Plano, reg. begins 9 am. Sponsored by FAAN and partnered with AAFA-TX. **6) Nov. 19**, 1:30-4:30 pm "Asthma Management & Education" a continuing ed. program worth 3 contact hours for nurses, Albuquerque, NM. Jan Tippett, instructor. Pre-registration required for each nursing program. Contact info@aafatexas.org for more information.

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