

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.

Air It Out – Electronic Version. Vol. 16, Issue 9, #2 September 2009

Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America, Texas Chapter, 9101 Quarter Horse Lane
Ft. Worth, TX 76123 817-297-3132 888-933-2232 info@aafatexas.org www.aafatexas.org

AAFA-TX received tributes in memory of Mrs. JoAnn Honn of San Antonio. Thank you.

STAY IN THE KNOW – RECENT ASTHMA AND ALLERGY NEWS

* If you're allergic to peanuts, soybean or sunflower seeds, does that mean that you would have an **allergic reaction to peanut oil, soybean oil, or sunflower oil**? According to a recent article by Steve Taylor, PhD, Food Allergy Research & Resource Program, University of Nebraska, **not necessarily**. Patients with allergies to these foods were tested in a safe medical environment by eating foods prepared in these oils and **none showed any allergic reactions** to the oils. The **allergen** in peanuts, soybeans or sunflower seeds **is to a protein** found in the foods but there is none of this protein in these edible oils as they are processed here. In the US, the oils are extracted from crushed seeds with a hot solvent, then the solvent is removed and highly refined oil remains. The **allergen protein isn't soluble** in the solvent, so these three oils (which were the only ones tested) should be safe to eat by those allergic to the legume itself. Products that contain these 3 oils (salad dressings, margarine, shortening, etc.) should also be safe to eat as long as they don't carry other peanut, soy or sunflower ingredients and if you know the oils were processed in the USA. **BUT** there are precautions if you have these food allergies and eat foods that are **commercially fried in these oils**. Many times foods fried in peanut oil contain peanuts, etc. If foods containing peanuts are fried in the oils, the foods could leach the allergen protein into the hot oil and this could lead to an allergic reaction. **AND** if the oil itself is **cold-pressed** rather than made with hot solvents, then the **proteins will linger in the oils**. Rarely sold in the US, cold-pressed peanut, soy and sunflower oils are usually found in foreign-processed oils, those you may find in a health food or gourmet food store. If you have these food allergies, always read labels carefully, ask restaurants what type of oil they use and if they fry foods with your allergens in these oils (which would trigger a reaction). It's best to **be cautious** to avoid an allergic food reaction that might lead to anaphylaxis.

* Are you **pregnant** and do you **have asthma, too**? AAFA-TX has always cautioned that it is vital to **monitor both your asthma as well as your pregnancy**. A recent study published in the New England Medical Journal has reinforced this practice. The study results show that **women who DO manage their asthma during their pregnancy** can have as healthy a pregnancy as women who don't have asthma, and their babies have no greater risk for complications due to the mother's asthma. Earlier studies show that **unmanaged asthma in pregnancy** can **cause complications** including preeclampsia, low birth-weight in the babies or premature births. If you have asthma and are pregnant, develop an action plan with both your pulmonologist and your obstetrician and follow it closely throughout your pregnancy.

* New research from John Hopkins Medical Center suggests that **eating foods or taking supplements with folic acid** (Vitamin B9) **may stop some allergic reactions** and decrease the severity of allergic reactions in general because **folic acid is an anti-inflammatory**. An initial finding, more studies need to be conducted with proof of this theory as well as the quantity of daily intake of folic acid required to provide positive results. **Foods naturally rich in folic acid** include (in order of the highest amount to lowest): braised beef liver, black-eyed peas, spinach, Great Northern beans, green peas, broccoli, lettuce, avocado, orange juice and wheat germ.

* Why do most **Americans just tolerate their allergy symptoms** even though we know that allergy symptoms reduce our quality of life and have high economic costs? One reason may be **dissatisfaction with current allergy treatment options**, the need to constantly rely on medications which can have unpleasant side-effects plus the cost of these medications. **Many** don't control their allergies simply because their **allergies have never been properly diagnosed** or are under-diagnosed. In Europe, **sublingual** (under the tongue) **immunotherapy** has been used for many different environmental allergens very effectively. In sublingual therapy, an **allergen solution is administered under the tongue** and over time, this reduces a person's allergic reactions to various substances. Normal immunotherapy in the USA involves a long series of allergen injections. Researchers have discovered that using **SLIT** (sublingual immunotherapy treatment) is **more patient-friendly**, very **efficient** and has **good results**. More important, European allergy patients were more likely to control and manage their allergies, thereby improving their quality of life, when using the SLIT process.

* Penn State Researchers discovered in a new study that **Buckwheat Honey**, a dark brown to purple honey with a strong sweet flavor, is a **safe alternative to OTC cold meds**. They found it is actually **more effective** for stopping coughs with **no side effects** than dextromethorphan, the most common ingredient in OTC cough syrups. Their recommended dose is ½ teaspoon for children ages 1 to 6 years, one teaspoon for children 6 to 11, and two teaspoons for 12 years and up every couple hours as needed. Buckwheat Honey, a longtime favorite, is cultivated in Ohio and is available in Texas in some grocery stores or online. As always, discuss this remedy with your own healthcare provider. **Do not use this remedy for infants under 1 year of age. Honey should never be given to infants less than 1 yr old.** For more information on asthma and allergies, contact us at info@aafatexas.org or visit our website www.aafatexas.org

Upcoming AAFA-TX programs: **1) Sept. 17** Worksite Health Fair, 7:30 am – 11:30 am. Pros Revenue Mgmt, Houston. **2) Sept. 30** "Taking Control of Your Asthma & Allergies" a corporate wellness program, Citigroup Irving, Andrew Beaty, MD, Instructor **3) October 6-8**, Health Awareness Week, Gardere, Wynne, Sewell LLP, Dallas. **4) Oct. 10** Baylor College of Medicine's 4th Annual Community Health Day, 10 am-4 pm, Lyon's Health Center, Houston 77020 **5) October 14-15**, Corporate Health Fair, Affiliated Computer Services, Inc., Dallas. For more info, contact info@aafatexas.org or see www.aafatexas.org/events

Information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for responsible professional care to diagnose and treat specific symptoms and illness. Any reference to products and procedures is not an endorsement. AAFA-TX and all parties associated with this Bulletin will not be held responsible for any action taken by readers as a result of this Newsletter.