

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](mailto:info@aafatexas.org). Addresses are never shared. Thank you. Please add new sender's email ([joanhart@aafatexas.org](mailto: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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**MORE OF YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED**

\* Again, we continue in this issue with more responses to AAFA-TX's patient and healthcare provider Help Line. Our respected specialists, **Robert Rogers, MD**, Ft. Worth Allergy & Asthma Associates, 817-233-2089, **William Lumry, MD**, Allergy & Asthma Specialists, Dallas, 214-373-7374 and **Richard Herscher, MD**, AIR Care, Plano and Dallas, 972-473-7544 share their expertise.

\* **Help Line Question:** My son started having **headaches** when he was prescribed a **new controller medication**. Is this a **side-effect** he just has to learn to accept, or it is more than that? Should he change medications?

\* **Dr. Lumry speaks:** Headaches can be a side effect of a medication and if your son's headaches coincided with the addition of a new medication, I would let his physician know about the problem. Most likely you will be advised to stop the medication and monitor your son's symptoms. Headaches can be a symptom of many other medical problems including things related to allergy such as a sinus infection. If the headaches do not end after stopping the new medication, ask his physician for further evaluation.

\* **Help Line Question:** I was told my daughter needs a **nebulizer machine** for her asthma medications. Are all of these machines the same, in other words, does it matter which one I buy?

\* **Dr. Herscher speaks:** Most of the nebulizer devices are of standard design and in this situation using a standard nebulizer cup with a wall plug AC compressor, then it **really doesn't matter which device you buy**. Some of the high tech devices like the PARI JET nebulizer system must use the PARI compressors since these cups require higher air pressures to mist effectively. The PARI systems are much more expensive and unless you have specific conditions that would require a smaller nebulized (misted) particle size, then the **higher cost is not justified**. There are **portable systems** that operate off car adapters or batteries and these devices will mist albuterol or Xopenex effectively but not Pulmicort. The portable devices **don't generate as high an air pressure** and have **trouble with thicker solutions** like Pulmicort. There may be specific situations where the portable systems are warranted but generally their use is limited and their cost is high.

\* **Help Line Question:** My son's been getting allergy shots, the same dosage, for about 3 years then suddenly he had an **anaphylactic reaction** to his shot. Why did this happen? Should we **stop his immunotherapy**?

\* **Dr. Rogers speaks:** Actually, we do not know why this phenomenon happens. People receiving allergy injections [allergen immunotherapy] face a **small but ever-present risk of experiencing anaphylaxis with each injection**. This is why almost all board-certified allergists insist that **patients receive their allergy injections in a medical setting** and remain in the clinic for 20-30 minutes to observe for signs of anaphylaxis. It is possible to safely continue injections after an anaphylactic reaction, but this is a decision that should be made in consultation with your allergist.

\* **Help Line Question:** This may sound like a silly question, but should **Metered Dose Inhalers be stored** [after opening] in an **upright position** in order to remain effective, or is it ok if they lie flat in a pocket, or even upside down?

\* **Dr. Herscher speaks:** The **Ventolin HFA inhaler** is the only device that **requires storing in an upright position** according to the package insert. I am not sure why this is the case, or even if it is truly necessary, but since the package insert claims this I would try to store it upright. The **other HFA inhalers** on the market **can be stored in any position**.

\* **Help Line Question:** One of my students has frequent asthma symptoms even though she's taking her medications as prescribed. She's also considered obese on the weight/height/age charts. Would losing the pounds and starting an exercise program to help her **lose weight help reduce her asthma symptoms**?

\* **Dr. Rogers speaks:** There is evidence that it is **more difficult to control asthma** in patients who are **significantly overweight**. Therefore, losing weight has the potential of improving asthma control. It is important to address the problem of exercise-induced asthma in this setting, as weight loss is far more likely to occur in those who exercise regularly.

\* If you have specific questions about asthma or allergy, whether for yourself, for your child or for a patient, email your inquires to [info@aafatexas.org](mailto:info@aafatexas.org). Many answers may be found in specific articles or past issues of our newsletter located on our website: [www.aafatexas.org](http://www.aafatexas.org)

**Upcoming AAFA-TX programs:** 1) Applications and qualifications for the AAFA-TX Kareem Bacchus Scholarships, 2009-2010 will be available on our website by November 15, 2009: [www.aafatexas.org](http://www.aafatexas.org). Completed applications MUST be returned to AAFA-TX preferably by scanning and emailing to [info@aafatexas.org](mailto:info@aafatexas.org) by March 15, 2010 or by mail postmarked **by March 15, 2010**. The 3 winning recipients will be notified by June 1, 2010. 2) **Current through July 2012** Do you have mild to severe asthma? Do you have asthma symptoms at least once a week even though you're following your medication therapy? Are you between 18 and 65 years of age? If so, you may want to participate in a biofeedback breathing technique study funded by the NIH and taking place now through July 2012 at Baylor University Medical Center and Southern Methodist University in Dallas. No medications will be changed during the 4 week long study. The objective is to learn better breathing technique to alleviate or prevent symptoms. For more info and to enroll in this free study, call 214-768-3414. Stress, Anxiety and Chronic Disease Research Center, Southern Methodist University, Expressway Tower, 6116 N. Central Expressway, Dallas, 75206 For more info contact [info@aafatexas.org](mailto:info@aafatexas.org) or see [www.aafatexas.org/events](http://www.aafatexas.org/events)

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