

Mission In Motion

Health & Wellness Monthly Newsletter

April 2013—Asthma & Allergies



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What Is Asthma?

Asthma (AZ-ma) is a chronic (long-term) lung disease that inflames and narrows the airways. Asthma causes recurring periods of wheezing (a whistling sound when you breathe), chest tightness, shortness of breath, and coughing. The coughing often occurs at night or early in the morning.

Asthma affects people of all ages, but it most often starts during childhood. In the United States, more than 25 million people are known to have asthma. About 7 million of these people are children.

Who Is at Risk for Asthma?

Asthma affects people of all ages, but it most often starts during childhood. In the United States, more than 25 million people are known to have asthma. About 7 million of these people are children.

Young children who often wheeze and have respiratory infections—as well as certain other risk factors—are at highest risk of developing asthma that continues beyond 6 years of age. The other risk factors include having allergies, eczema (an allergic skin condition), or parents who have asthma. Among children, more boys have asthma than girls. But among adults, the disease affects men and women equally. It's not clear whether or how sex and sex hormones play a role in causing asthma.

Most, but not all, people who have asthma have allergies.

Some people develop asthma because of contact with certain chemical irritants or industrial dusts in the workplace. This type of asthma is called occupational asthma.

How Can Asthma Be Prevented?

You can't prevent asthma. However, you can take steps to control the disease and prevent its symptoms. For example:

- Learn about your asthma and ways to control it. Follow your written asthma action plan. (For a sample plan, go to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's "[Asthma Action Plan](#).")
- Use medicines as your doctor prescribes.
- Identify and try to avoid things that make your asthma worse (asthma triggers). However, one trigger you should not avoid is physical activity. Physical activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Talk with your doctor about medicines that can help you stay active.
- Keep track of your asthma symptoms and level of control.
- Get regular checkups for your asthma.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Spring and Fresh Air

This is perhaps one of the most important green tips to remember, and it is one of the easiest to complete. As the temperatures transition from frigid to pleasant, always open the windows in favor of turning on the air conditioner or ceiling fan. While it has been written before, it is worth restating, as it saves a great amount of electricity and improves the air quality in one's home. Air inside of the home is often far more polluted than the air outside, especially after the long and stuffy winter. During your spring cleaning, leave the windows wide open to let in the refreshing and renewing spring air. This will save on your electricity bill, and it will clean your house in an eco-friendly way.

SEASONAL ALLERGIES: Nip them in the bud

Relieve seasonal allergies with these tried-and-true techniques.

Spring means flower buds and blooming trees — and if you're one of the millions of people who have seasonal allergies, it also means sneezing, congestion, runny nose and other bothersome symptoms. Seasonal allergies — also called hay fever and allergic rhinitis — can make you miserable. But before you settle for plastic flowers and artificial turf, try these simple strategies to keep seasonal allergies under control.

Reduce your exposure to allergy triggers

To reduce your exposure to the things that trigger your allergy signs and symptoms (allergens):

- Stay indoors on dry, windy days — the best time to go outside is after a good rain, which helps clear pollen from the air.
- Delegate lawn mowing, weed pulling and other gardening chores that stir up allergens.
- Remove clothes you've worn outside; you may also want to shower to rinse pollen from your skin and hair.
- Don't hang laundry outside — pollen can stick to sheets and towels.
- Wear a dust mask if you do outside chores.

Keep indoor air clean

There's no miracle product that can eliminate all allergens from the air in your home, but these suggestions may help:

- Use the air conditioning in your house and car.
- If you have forced air heating or air conditioning in your house, use high-efficiency filters and follow regular maintenance schedules.
- Keep indoor air dry with a dehumidifier.
- Use a portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter in your bedroom.
- Clean floors often with a vacuum cleaner that has a HEPA filter.

Interested in alternative treatments? Consider these

A number of natural remedies have been used to treat hay fever symptoms. Treatments that may help include extracts of the shrub butterbur and spirulina (a type of dried algae). A number of other natural remedies are used to treat allergies, but the benefits aren't clear and some may not be safe — so talk to your doctor before trying one.

When home remedies aren't enough, see your doctor

For many people, avoiding allergens and taking over-the-counter medications is enough to ease symptoms. But if your seasonal allergies are still bothersome, don't give up. A number of other treatments are available.

If you have bad seasonal allergies, your doctor may recommend that you have skin tests or blood tests to find out exactly what allergens trigger your symptoms. Testing can help determine what steps you need to take to avoid your specific triggers and identify which treatments are likely to work best for you.

For some people, allergy shots (allergen immunotherapy) can be a good option. Also known as desensitization, this treatment involves regular injections containing tiny amounts of the substances that cause your allergies. Over time, these injections reduce the immune system reaction that causes symptoms.

If you smoke, you're not the only one exposed to the associated health risks.

In fact, studies show that about 43 percent of American children ages two to 11 are exposed to second-hand, or passive, smoke at home.* Children, especially infants, of parents who smoke are more likely to develop illnesses, such as bronchitis, pneumonia and asthma. And, parents who smoke also are more likely to cough and spread germs to their children. In addition, exposure to tobacco smoke increases the risk of heart disease.

Next time you get the urge to smoke, pass on it — so you won't pass on second-hand smoke.

*Source: American Heart Association

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www.bcbstx.com

MONTHLY SMARTS

FOOD SMARTS

If you're facing a stressful day, start it with a bowl of oatmeal. The complex carbs and B vitamins in this healthy whole-grain cereal stimulate the release of brain-calming chemicals.

HEALTHCARE CONSUMER SMARTS

When fresh fruits start to get too ripe for your taste, you needn't throw them out. Instead, blend them with low-fat yogurt or milk to create a delicious smoothie.

SAFETY SMARTS

Learn to stretch the right way to avoid injury. Warm up your muscles before hand. Ease into each stretch—don't bounce. Stretch into a position only to a point of mild tension—not pain. Hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds.

Source: Positive Promotions

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Simply smiling goes a long way toward nourishing a cheerful outlook.

It's just one of the many strategies you can use to stay upbeat, energized, and looking forward to each day.

- Have realistic expectation of yourself and others.
- Get enough sleep to recharge your batteries.
- Choose to look for the good in everyone.
- Do something nice for someone.

Source: Positive Promotions

City of Mission Walking Club

Did you know that City of Mission has a Walking Club? You are encouraged to join us!

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays

Where: City Hall

Time: Stretches begin at 5:20 p.m. and Walking begins at 5:30 p.m.

Distance: 1 mile

Contact Human Resources to register for the Walking Club and receive a free t-shirt and pedometer!

WALKING CLUB MONTHLY DRAWING WINNER FOR MARCH 2013:

SUSIE DE LUNA - PLANNING DEPARTMENT

\$10.00 SUBWAY GIFT CARD





April Health & Wellness Seminar:

Topic: Asthma & Allergies

Date: April 25, 2013

Time: 2:30–3:30 pm

Speaker : Dr. Mario Anzaldúa, MD

Location: City Hall—Council Chambers

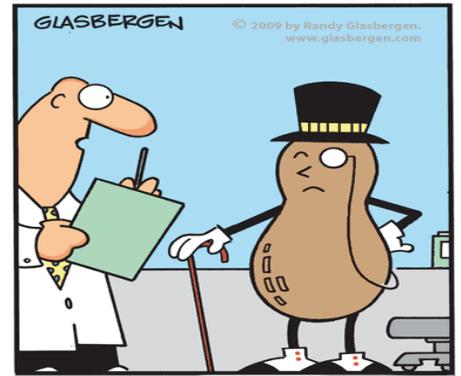
Tilapia with Chunky Tomato Sauce

- 2 (14-oz) cans no salt added diced tomatoes, drained
 - 1/4 cup chopped green onions, including green stems
 - 1/2 tsp. sugar (optional)
 - 1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh basil (2 tsp. dried may be substituted)
 - 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
 - 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
 - Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
 - 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper (or to taste)
 - 1 Tbsp. olive oil
 - 1 lb. tilapia fillets
 - 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
- Place all ingredients, except oil, fish and parsley in a bowl and gently combine well.
- In large skillet heat oil over medium high heat. Place fish in skillet. Top with tomato mixture, cover and simmer over medium low heat for 8-10 minutes or until fish is cooked. Garnish with parsley and serve.

Makes 4 servings.

Per serving: 175 calories, 6 g total fat (1 g saturated fat), 10 g carbohydrate, 22 g protein, 2 g dietary fiber, 102 mg sodium.

Cartoon Corner



“Impaired vision, bloated abdomen, cold hands...they could be symptoms of a severe peanut allergy.”

Health & Wellness Seminars

May 2013—Stroke Awareness

June 2013—Men’s Health

(Topics subject to change)

*If you have a subject or topic that you would like more information on, feel free to make your request at 956-580-8630.

Burn Calculator: Cooking

120 Calories



60 minutes

There are 120 Calories in a grilled, skinless chicken breast. Cooking for an hour can burn 120 calories. You can burn off some of your mealtime calories just by making it yourself.

Mission In Motion

Our mission is to promote health awareness and

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