Allergies

What are allergies?
When you have an allergy your body will overreact to things that don’t cause problems for most people and these things are called allergens.

Although having allergies can be difficult, they are not life threatening.

Common allergens:
- Pollen
- Dust mites
- Mold spores
- Pet dander
- Food
- Insect stings
- Medicines

Allergy symptoms:
- runny nose
- sneezing
- itching
- rashes
- swelling
- asthma

Treatment:
- Antihistamines
- Decongestants
- Cromolyn sodium (nasal spray)
- Nasal steroid sprays
- Eye drops
- Allergy shots

Food Allergies

What are food allergies?
A food allergy is an abnormal reaction to a food triggered by your body’s immune system.

Some allergic reactions to food can sometimes cause serious illness and even death.

Common food allergens:
- Fish and shellfish, such as shrimp, lobster and crab
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts, such as walnuts
- Eggs
- Milk

Food allergy symptoms:
- skin rash or red, itchy skin
- stuffy, itchy nose
- sneezing
- itching, watery eyes
- tingling in hands/feet, lips or scalp

Asthma

What is asthma?
Asthma is a chronic disease characterized by inflammation of the air passages resulting in the temporary narrowing of the airways (tubes).

Asthma can not be cured, but with proper treatment it can be controlled.

Common causes:
- Allergens -- animal dander or dust mites
- Irritants -- cigarette smoke or cold air or changes in weather
- Others -- medicines (aspirin and beta-blockers) or infections

Asthma symptoms:
- wheezing
- coughing
- chest tightness and trouble breathing

Treatment:
- Quick-relief medicines—taken at the first signs of asthma symptoms for immediate relief
- Long-term control medicines—taken every day, usually over long periods of time, to prevent symptoms and asthma episodes or attacks
| Family Resource Center Books on Allergies, Food Allergies and Asthma |
|---|---|
| **Infant/Toddler/Preschool** | **Preteen 10-12** |
| *Allergies* by Sharon Gordon 2003 | *Allergies* by Terry Allan Hicks 2006 |
| *Asthma* by Sharon Gordon 2003 | *Asthma* by Ruth Bjorklund 2005 |
| *Cody the Allergic Cow: A Children’s Story of Milk Allergies* by Nicole Smith, 2002 | *Asthma Update* by Alvin Silverstein, Virginia Silverstein & Laura Silverstein Nunn 2006 |
| *The Lion Who Had Asthma* by Jonathan London 1997 | |

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<th><strong>School-age 5-9</strong></th>
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<td><em>Asthma</em> by Alvin Silverstein &amp; Virginia Silverstein &amp; Laura Silverstein Nunn 2002</td>
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<td><em>Food Allergies</em> by Jason Glaser 2007</td>
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<td><em>I Have Asthma</em> by Jennifer Moore-Molinos 2007</td>
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<td><em>My Asthma Book</em> by Maria Muirhead 2007</td>
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<td><em>The Complete Kid’s Allergy and Asthma Guide</em> by Milton Gold 2003</td>
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<td><em>The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Guide to Asthma</em> by Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Staff 2004</td>
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<td><em>Food Allergies for Dummies</em> by Robert A. Wood &amp; Joe Kraynak 2007</td>
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<td><em>Harvard Medical School Guide to Taking Control of Asthma</em> by Christopher H. Fanta, et al. 2003</td>
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**Online Resources**

http://www.aaaai.org/ -- This organization works to provide high quality, compassionate health care for those with allergy, asthma and immunologic disorders. The site provides useful patient information, professional education, member updates, physician referral services, and timely data for the media.

http://www.aafa.org/index.cfm -- More than 50 million Americans have allergies and 20 million have asthma. This organization is here to help with education, advocacy, research, publications, chapters, and support groups. On this site you can get quick facts about asthma, allergies (including food allergies) and more!

http://www.aaia.ca/ -- This website is entitled the Allergy/Asthma Information Association (AAIA), a federally registered Canadian charity. They were founded in 1964 by a group of parents whose children had severe allergies. They are the only Canadian patient association that deals with all aspects of allergy, including asthma, allergic rhinitis and anaphylaxis. In this capacity, they strive to be the best possible resource for services and information.
http://www.allergicchild.com/index.html -- Allergicchild.com is the creation of Robert and Nicole Smith, the parents of a severely food allergic child diagnosed at the age of 9 months old. It's been a learning-filled eleven years since then. They would like to share their experience with you to help you keep your food allergic child safe, healthy and living as close to a 'normal' life as possible.

http://www.foodallergy.org/ -- The mission of The Food Allergy Network is to increase public awareness about food allergies and anaphylaxis, a severe, life-threatening reaction. They provide education, emotional support and coping strategies to individuals with food allergies. They work with families, doctors, nurses, dietitians, and the food industry. They will also provide assistance to individuals who wish to start a support group in their locality.

http://www.foodallergyinitiative.org/ -- The Food Allergy Initiative (FAI) is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization that raises funds toward the effective treatment and cure for food allergies. FAI is the first organization dedicated to a strategic, comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach to food allergies. Their program is designed to help the millions of children and adults who live in fear of eating the wrong food with every bite they take.

http://www.kidswithfoodallergies.org/ -- Kids with Food Allergies is a national nonprofit food allergy support group dedicated to fostering optimal health, nutrition and well-being of children with food allergies by providing education and a caring support community for their families and caregivers.

www.uwasthmastudies.org -- The University of Wisconsin Asthma, Allergy, and Pulmonary Research Center is a nationally known research facility that has been studying asthma for over 30 years. Their research department conducts studies in both children and adults. Their research efforts, along with the thousands of people who have been in their studies, have helped to develop new asthma medications that may include those you currently use.