THE ALLERGY & ASTHMA CLINIC

Andrew C. Engler, M.D.

290 Baldwin Avenue, San Mateo, California 94401

(650) 343-4597 FAX (650) 343- 3402

www.theallergyclinic.com

NEWSLETTER **April 2011**

Interesting Updates from the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI)

Dr. Engler attended the annual AAAAI meeting which was held in San Francisco last month. He came back with a number of scientific updates, some of which we'd like to share with you in this month's newsletter:

Is Eczema causing you grief? New data shows there can be more effective relief!

New allergy guidelines confirm that immunotherapy (allergy shots or sublingual drops) can help many patients with eczema who are sensitive to airborne allergens such as pollen and dust when other more common treatments fail to give adequate relief. The studies show that immunotherapy is not only effective for controlling respiratory allergy symptoms such as hayfever and asthma but can also be effective for controlling eczema (atopic dermatitis). In a systematic placebo-controlled study, the results indicated that patients who received immunotherapy experienced significant decreases in their eczema. In a more extensive study, which compared both immunotherapy and the use of topical corticosteroid (cortisone) on adults suffering from eczema, the study showed much less eczema in patients treated with immunotherapy than those who used topical corticosteroids alone, particularly for those with dust mite allergy. And the results were not only good for patients treated with allergy shots; another extensive study compared the results using sublingual (oral) immunotherapy which also showed a decrease in the severity of their eczema. We are happy to hear that immunotherapy has now been confirmed to help patients with eczema. Dr. Engler has noticed for years that this treatment can very effective for select patients, especially those who suffer from both skin and respiratory allergies. If eczema is an issue and other treatment options have been ineffective for you in the past, please contact our office so we can discuss appropriate treatment options to help you feel better and give you some relief.

Top Allergy Experts support Oral Immunotherapy as a good alternative

During the conference, Dr. Engler also attended multiple meetings on Sublingual (Oral) Immunotherapy—this was a very hot topic at the meeting. In one symposium, five top internationally renowned allergy experts presented data proving the effectiveness of this allergy treatment for patients who need to be on shots but find them to be inconvenient. All five of the experts presented similar excellent results concluding that patients on oral immunotherapy, compared to the placebo group, experienced significant decreases in their symptoms and increased levels of protective antibodies indicating that their level of immunity was increased. In patients treated only with medication, peak pollen levels "overwhelmed" the effect of medication and the patients experienced very uncomfortable allergy symptoms. In contrast, those patients treated with immunotherapy were less likely to experience these massive allergy attacks and the medication they took typically worked better for them. The research also showed that the patients who continued treatment consistently throughout the year did much better when the treatment was started than the patients who only used oral treatment "seasonally". It is important to note that on average it takes 6 months to a year before significant benefits are realized. We are pleased to report that oral immunotherapy has proven to be a beneficial alternative to injection immunotherapy (which is still considered the gold standard allergy treatment option). Although there are not many practices who offer this as a treatment option, we are happy that we have been able to provide oral immunotherapy to our patients as an option for many years and clinical research continues to prove its effectiveness for many, many patients.

Food Allergy Update---Prevention and Treatment

New research has demonstrated some exciting results in the field of food allergy over the past 12 months. A review of these developments included:
A study was conducted of children known to be allergic to milk or egg to see what factors made them more likely to also be allergic to peanuts. The results: Women who ingested peanuts while pregnant were much more likely to have children who were also allergic to peanuts than women who did not. What does this mean? At this point in time, we're not 100% sure; the studies are conflicting, but based on this data, it looks like allergic mothers may want to avoid eating peanuts while pregnant or nursing to help reduce the chance that their children will become allergic to peanuts. However, the authors noted that it is important that these children be carefully followed to see what actually happens with their peanut sensitivity. Another important development was the results from a small group of children with egg allergy who were successfully treated with oral immunotherapy. After completing this treatment, most of the children became less allergic on both skin and blood tests and were able to tolerate eating an increased amount of eggs than they had beforehand without experiencing any serious reactions. While this research is very promising, the authors stressed that the treatment is still considered experimental. However, we are very excited that these developments offer promise to those families burdened with highly food allergic children and we look forward to the day when we will be able to offer this treatment to our patients.

If you or a loved one suffer from food allergies or are concerned that there are foods that could be causing your allergies to act up--please contact our office. We can provide you with a careful evaluation and, if appropriate, a food allergy action plan to help you minimize the effects food allergy can be having on your overall health.