

THE ALLERGY & ASTHMA CLINIC

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NEWSLETTER

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New Medical Device Helps Diagnose and Treat Asthma & Other Respiratory Disorders

Are you at risk of developing or do you already suffer from asthma, without even realizing it? Are your bronchial airways inflamed, even though you don't experience any symptoms? If you are taking lung inhalers or other respiratory medicines, are you on the optimum dose? These are questions we often face which can be difficult to answer.

One fact we do know is that patients with allergy can have 20 times the risk of developing asthma as those who do not have allergies. But what steps can we take to monitor allergic patients and give them the best possible outcome? There has been a major step forward with the approval in 2008 by the FDA of a new medical device that our clinic recently acquired. The device is called the Insight™ eNO, and was developed by a Menlo Park firm named Apieron. This test actually measures airway inflammation and helps to answer many of the questions we have. It is important to note that the Insight eNO does not replace the standard use of spirometry (the measurement of lung function and airway capacity). The eNO device is designed to be used as an important supplement to

spirometry; scientific research has proven that these 2 tests complement each other in a synergistic fashion. Medical studies have also shown that patients who are monitored with both tests frequently have better outcomes with less medication.

Common symptoms of asthma include shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, chest tightness and congestion. They are due to three main factors: the smooth muscle surrounding the bronchial airway narrowing in response to a trigger, swelling of the airway due to inflammation, and mucus within the airway that obstructs breathing. The standard treatment for this condition (there is no cure) is regular use of inhaled steroids. In addition, "rescue medications" such as albuterol help relieve acute symptoms.

The procedure most commonly used to diagnose, monitor and manage asthma does not actually measure airway inflammation, which is the leading cause of asthma. It has been known for over 10 years that the measurement of eNO (exhaled nitric oxide) is an accepted and trusted method of measuring bronchial airway inflammation. Unfortunately, until now, there has been no practical way of utilizing this knowledge in the treatment of asthmatics. That has now been remedied with the Insight eNO. This new device is easy to use

and allows considerably more accurate measurements of airway inflammation. One important benefit to the patient is that the dose of medication necessary for treatment can be provided in far more precise amounts. In some patients, the treatment plan will lead to more aggressive treatment efforts while in many others the amount of the medication can be reduced, without negatively affecting patient outcomes. The test is hygienic, safe, non-invasive and economical. It is rare that a new device is introduced that provides this level of advancement in patient care at such a small price. The Insight™ eNO is just that and we are excited to be the first allergy office in San Mateo County which offers this important test to our patients.

Insurance Benefits and the New Year

The new year brings changes to any number of health plans, deductibles and co-pays. Please review your own particular insurance situation. If there has been a change in coverage for you or a family member - or even if you are in doubt - please call our office. Our desire, as always, is to provide the very best medical care combined with excellent administrative care from our business staff. Together we can help you get the maximum benefits that you deserve from your medical insurance carrier.