

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

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Newsletter

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Don't Let Asthma or Allergies Ruin Your Valentine's Day!

Valentine's Day is quickly approaching, and while many may not realize it, those with allergies and asthma have to be extra careful on this special day. Boxes of candy, perfume or cologne, eating at a nice restaurant can quickly turn a thoughtful gift into a bad situation if your allergy or asthma sufferer is exposed to their triggers.

Here are a few common Valentine's Day ideas and suggestions from the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) on how to keep your Valentine's Day safe and special.

Jewelry? If you are considering giving your loved one a gift of jewelry, you need to be aware of if they have a contact dermatitis, a skin reaction or irritation caused by something that comes in contact with the skin. A common contact dermatitis is nickel, which is often found in jewelry.

Have a fire place? A nice snuggle in front of a fire may not be the best idea for someone with asthma because the smoke can trigger an asthma flare up. Instead, why not invest in a quartz heater which looks like a fireplace and still keeps you warm, without the smoke.

A box of chocolates is safe? Not really. Chocolates are very commonly given on Valentine's Day, however, they often contain milk, eggs, and nuts, which can cause severe allergic reactions if your loved one has any food allergies. Be sure to check ingredients before giving that heart-shaped box of chocolates.

Bouquet of flowers? Another classic, but be careful since there are many people with allergies who will start sneezing or wheezing when around pollens. Perfumes and colognes are also not well tolerated due to volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which can cause runny nose, wheezing, sneezing, headaches, and watery eyes. It is best to avoid those "smelly" products and choose natural fragrances instead.

Planning a trip? How romantic! If you do plan a trip to celebrate Valentine's Day, make sure to pack allergy and asthma medications and keep them nearby. Choose a smoke free room. Keep in mind that hotel rooms can collect a lot of dust, so if dust mites are your trigger, consider bringing your own dust mite proof pillow covers. Make sure the rental car you pick up has not been smoked in and if you can smell smoke, ask for another.

A few safe alternatives that will still make Valentine's Day fun and loving:

- Love notes scattered throughout the house
- Couples massage (if possible, request hypoallergenic oils)
- Surprise your Valentine with a clean house
- Dinner in, where you can control the ingredients in your meals to make it allergy safe
- Photo collage
- Trip to a museum
- Spa day
- Movie night
- Nickel-free jewelry

Keep allergies and asthma in mind this Valentine's Day to avoid any trips to the Emergency Room. If you are uncertain of any food or environmental allergies you may have, make an appointment with one of our health care providers so that we can do testing and provide you with treatment options to better control your allergies and asthma. Be mindful of others and make this Valentine's Day special.

