

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

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Newsletter

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Top Doctors of San Mateo 2019

We are very proud to announce that Dr. Andrew Engler was chosen as a Top Doctor of San Mateo 2019 by Castle Connolly Medical Ltd., a healthcare research and information company that has made it its mission to guide patients to the finest physicians and hospitals in the country.



How does Castle Connolly do it? Physicians nominate those other doctors whom they feel are the most outstanding in their medical specialties. Doctors do not and cannot pay to be listed as a Castle Connolly Top Doctor

Asthma, Allergies and the Flu

The traditional start of flu season is only a few weeks away. Influenza (flu) can be more serious for people with allergies and asthma, even if their asthma is mild or their symptoms are well-controlled by medication. This is because people with asthma often have swollen and sensitive airways and influenza can cause further inflammation of the airways and lungs. Influenza infection in the lungs can trigger asthma attacks and a worsening of asthma symptoms. It also can lead to pneumonia and other acute respiratory diseases, which in turn can lead to serious complications.

Which flu vaccine should people with asthma get?

Flu shots (made with inactivated (killed) flu virus) are approved for use in people 6 months and older regardless of whether or not they have asthma or other health conditions. The flu shot has a long established safety record in people with asthma, including those patients who have an egg allergy.

Nasal spray vaccine: While the nasal spray vaccine is approved for use in people 2 through 49 years of age, children 2 years through 4 years who have asthma or who have had a history of wheezing in the past 12 months should not get the nasal spray vaccine. People of any age with asthma might be at increased risk for wheezing after getting the nasal spray flu vaccine. Also, the safety of the nasal spray flu vaccine in people with lung disease and some other high risk conditions has not been established.

If you do get sick with flu symptoms, call your primary care doctor and take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor recommends them. Keep in mind that antivirals should be taken with 48 hours of symptom onset or exposure for maximum benefit.

The September Asthma Epidemic

What is the worst asthma day of the year? It's about September 17th. Students have returned to school sharing germs which creates a surge in asthma hospitalizations, called the "September Epidemic". Nearly 25 percent of all children's asthma hospitalizations happen in

September. The number of asthma hospitalizations peak first for school-age children, then preschool children, then adults. Serious asthma flares are often (but not always) associated with respiratory tract infections, especially rhinovirus. Rhinovirus is the main cause of the common cold. Crowded school classrooms are hotbeds of germs and "cold season" peaks in the fall. Kids catch colds at school, get ill and then expose their parents and younger siblings to the illness.

Here are a few tips on how you can avoid this epidemic.

- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer often
- Follow an Asthma Action Plan
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing
- Monitor symptoms and peak flow rates
- Keep sick family members home
- Use medications before symptoms begin
- Consistently take allergy and asthma medications, as prescribed, even when symptom free
- Minimize environmental triggers
- Keep medication refills on hand
- Keep asthma medication and peak flow meter at school

Asthma is the number one reason children miss time from school, so staying healthy means more time in school. For parents, staying healthy means less time spent missing work or using sick days to take care of family members. It's not too late to get everyone off to a healthier start this school year!

If you have any questions about the medications you are taking, or whether your dose should be adjusted, please let us know so we can review your allergy and asthma treatment plan. Also, if you are being or have been treated with allergy immunotherapy (allergy shots or drops) and have gotten off course during the summer months, please contact us so we can get you back on track.

Please call to schedule your allergy and asthma check-up appointment. We are happy to help you develop your Asthma Action Plan to prepare for the flu season.