

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

www.TheAllergyClinic.com

Andrew C. Engler, M.D.

290 Baldwin Avenue, San Mateo, California 94401

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

Newsletter

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Keeping Our Children Well While at Summer Camp

“Parents of kids with allergies and asthma have lots to think about this summer as they consider summer camp,” says allergist Luz Fonacier, MD, President of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI). “The CDC has issued guidelines for keeping campers and staff protected from COVID-19. At the same time, camps still need to make sure measures are in place in case a camper has an allergic reaction or an asthma flare.”

Since the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccinations have been approved for those age 12 and up, many parents are considering having their children attend summer camps, especially given the significant change to the academic school year. It goes without saying that the pandemic has affected children’s ability to see their friends and reinforce those friendships, which can in turn affect their mental health. For many children, summer camps can help to create and nurture friendships, promote independence and encourage a connection with nature. Once the decision has been made to send your child to summer camp, there are a few things to remember for your child with environmental and food allergies and asthma.

- Schedule a quick follow up with your allergy and asthma specialist. During this visit, besides getting an updated physical exam and reviewing the allergy and asthma treatment plan, make sure that prescription medications are current and not expired.
- Most camps obviously involve the outdoors and to decrease the chance of your child’s allergies from flaring while outside, ensure that he/she is taking all allergy medications as prescribed. If your child does

- not take allergy medications daily, it may be worthwhile to have them start taking a non-sedating antihistamine and/or an anti-inflammatory nasal spray a week before starting camp. These medications should be continued while at camp to help reduce any flare-ups.
- Make sure that your child has his/her allergy medications with them at camp. The camp should be provided with specific instructions on when and how to take your child’s oral medications, inhalers or nasal sprays.
- For those children with food allergies, make sure that you inform the camp what your child’s food allergies are. Reinforce the importance of preventing food cross contamination, especially if your child has a life threatening food allergy. Provide the camp with a Food Allergy Action Plan and if your child has a severe food allergies, have Benadryl and an adrenaline-injector device on hand. Don’t be afraid to ask the camp what emergency procedures are in place, including whether there are medically trained staff available.
- Last, but not least, teach your child to avoid poison ivy or poison oak. Exposure to these plants can lead to very uncomfortable rashes, which may require additional treatment besides Calamine lotion and antihistamines.

We hope that this summer season brings our children much needed time with the outdoors and hopefully, establish new friendships.

In observance of the July 4th Holiday, our offices will be closed on Monday July, 5, 2021.