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From the President

This past fall, AAFA Alaska hosted its first asthma and allergy conference—over 120 health care professionals attended and more than 20 participants from the public. A wealth of information was delivered at the conference by local experts, as well as top allergy and asthma experts from across the United States. Here are some questions or concerns raised at the conference in the public forum. Read on—these may be questions you’ve been wondering about also!

“I have a young child with eczema and food allergies. Is there anything we can do to prevent or delay asthma?”

This question refers to the “allergic march” where a young child starts with food allergy and eczema and then progresses on to aeroallergen sensitivity and ultimately, asthma. Prevention? Consider these possibilities; unfortunately, there is not a one size fits all answer:

- Absolute avoidance of food allergens and keeping the skin in as good a shape as possible might help prevent asthma.
- Minimize the inflammatory milieu so that exposure to everyday antigens does not result in sensitization and an allergy response. This would mean, for example, avoiding dust mites by utilizing dust mite encasings on pillows, mattresses and box springs.
- Use of probiotics, bacteria that is naturally present in the gastrointes-

tinal system, has been advocated to improve the immune system’s health. Probiotics can be found in yogurt, for example, that contains live cultures such as *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*

- Overuse of antibiotics especially in the first year of life has been associated with increased asthma.

“What is the best skin reaction test?”

There are 2 types of tests an allergist can do to test for an immunologic response (allergic reaction) to a food or other allergen. The first is the epicutaneous skin test. It evaluates for specific IgE to a particular allergen and tests for the possibility of immediate reactions to allergens, for example, someone that is allergic to peanuts and experiences an immediate reaction (anaphylaxis) that involves the whole body (hives, breathing difficulties, low blood pressure, diarrhea, throat swelling). A reaction like this requires the availability of injectable epinephrine, life saving measure when used appropriately. Type I or IgE reactions can also be important in eczema. We can also do patch testing. This testing looks for a delayed, cell mediated, reaction to food. Patch testing has been found helpful in gastrointestinal problems and also in eczema with delayed reactions to foods. So, which test is best depends on what the problem is.

Hopefully you find these questions and answers helpful. January’s newsletter we will answer more questions!

Teresa Neeno, MD

AAFA Alaska Mission Statement: AAFA Alaska is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for people affected by asthma and allergies through education, collaboration with community resources, support and research.



AAFA Alaska believes that education enhances quality of life for people with asthma & allergies & is committed to providing quality programs and information about allergies and asthma.

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- All Membership levels will receive a copy of AAFA Alaska’s Newsletter, The Daily Meter
- Memberships at \$50 and higher will receive a copy of Dr. Plaut’s One Minute Asthma Reference guide.
- Memberships at \$100 and higher will receive a copy of AAFA Alaska’s storybook, Wheezin’, Sneezin’ and Itchin’ in Alaska.

**Success Stories:
Overcoming asthma &/or allergy struggles**

My tenth birthday I spent in the hospital, having my first asthma attack. I remember being so excited to reach the “double digits,” however that birthday became a milestone in other ways, as well. Suddenly, I had to take daily medications, part with my beloved animals, couldn’t visit friends with pets, carry an inhaler, and became labeled an *asthmatic*; it took years for me to fully understand what that meant. The hardest part was learning to accept limits: I can’t always enjoy all of Alaskan’s long days outdoors; a snuggle with the cutest puppy isn’t worth struggling to breathe and the discomfort of itchy eyes for the next 24 hours; planning ahead is a must; and I had to make sure I had my rescue inhaler available.

The medications I am on now give me more freedom than ever. While I struggle with lung infections from years of damage, I rarely feel I have to limit my daily activities due to asthma. My success: I have been competing in fitness competitions for just over 2 years, have won a National competition & next will compete for Professional Status. I’m very proud to be successful in a sport that requires strong cardiovascular health.

My ten year old daughter just had her first asthma attack and my eight year old daughter has had sporadic asthma and allergy symptoms for the past two years. With consistent medication, both of their symptoms are under control. My biggest gift to them is to demonstrate how to be a responsible asthmatic. I am vigilant about helping them to remember to take their medication, avoid allergens, and monitor their breathing. I also show them how to adapt to obstacles—take advantage of times when breathing is easy, and to offer no apologies for those times when it’s more challenging. I may have asthma, but asthma doesn’t have me.--Karen Patten

Share your success story with members of AAFA Alaska by e-mailing a story to aafaAlaska@gci.net.

Question: Have you had your flu shot yet this fall?
REMINDER: Those with asthma are at risk for serious complications from the flu. Flu vaccine does have egg protein in it and is not recommended for individuals with an allergy to EGGS.

Rice Flour Cookies

Take two quarters of butter* from the refrigerator and put in microwave for 13-14 seconds. This is **IMPORTANT**. The butter must not be too hard or too soft. Beat butter in mixer until not too many lumps.

Add 3/4 cup white sugar and 3/4 cup brown sugar. Beat with butter until all are blended without lumps. **NOT** until fluffy.

Add two eggs* and beat together a bit.

Add

- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp vanilla extract (the real stuff is best but imitation will work also)

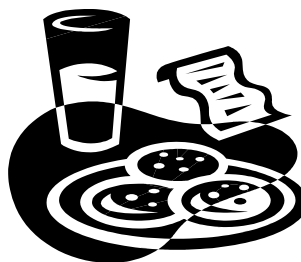
wheat/peanut/tree nut-free

Add 2 1/2 cups rice flour.

Mix together until well mixed.

Put on a cookie sheet (the air type ones are best...air between two layers of metal).

Bake at 325-330° for about 13-15 minutes depending on the size of your cookies and how well done you like them. You will have to experiment on this a bit because every oven is slightly different.



*Recipes
submitted by
Mary
Strawbridge.*

Banana Bread

wheat/peanut/tree nut-free

Using beater or mixer beat 3 small or 2 large ripe bananas. Add 2 eggs*. Beat together with bananas.

Sift together:

- 1 3/4 cups of flour (as prepared in side box)
- 2 TBSP sugar
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking soda

Add

- 1/2 cup vegetable oil to bananas and eggs*.

In a measuring cup, measure 1/3 cup milk* and add 1 teaspoon white vinegar. Let stand one minute.

Add flour mixture and milk mixture to banana mixture.

Beat a few seconds and then stir until flour is mixed in.

Bake in two nine inch cake pans (not the traditional bread pan). Spray the pans with Pam or spray of your choice before adding bread mixture.

Bake at 325 to 330° for about 35 minutes or until top of bread is lightly browned. This will vary with ovens.

Flour mixture for Banana Bread:

1. 3 pounds brown rice
2. 1 pound 6 ounces oat flour
3. 1 pound soy flour
4. 1 pound 6 ounces barley flour
5. 1 pound 6 ounces sweet dairy whey*

Mix these flours together well. Store in airtight container. Mary uses Bob's Red Mill flours.

*Dairy and Egg-free?

Try using your butter and milk substitutes and/or an egg replacement using oil, water & baking powder or Xanthan gum.

Powdered rice and soy milk are available.

Let us know which substitutes you find work the best!



Pumpkin Pie Submitted by Tasha Huhta, member of AAFA Alaska

Try this recipe make-over!

Follow the Libby's Pumpkin Pie recipe with the following exceptions:

- Substitute the 2 eggs with your favorite egg substitute (Tasha has successfully used 1/4 cup applesauce plus ENER-G egg replacement for 1 egg)
- In place of the evaporated milk use 1 packet of Knox unflavored gelatin plus 12 ounces of Soy Milk

This year, Tasha is going to try this pie crust recipe from www.enjoylifefoods.com:

- 1 package of Snickerdoodle Cookies (Enjoy Life cookies)
- 3 TBSP margarine, melted. (substitute with dairy-free)
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/3 c. Brown Sugar

Process in food processor until well combined. Place in 9" pie shell. Press down & smooth up the sides.

Bake 350° for 8 minutes. Let cool. Fill as desired. *Enjoy your SAFE holiday feast!*

Be S.A.F.E.

- **SEEK** immediate medical help.
- Identify the **ALLERGEN**.
- **FOLLOW UP** with a specialist.
- Carry **EPINEPHRINE** for emergencies.
- Dizziness and fainting or loss of consciousness, which can lead to shock and heart failure.

These symptoms may be immediate or delayed. The sooner they are treated (with epinephrine), the less severe the reaction is likely to be.

A: Allergen—what did you get exposed to before you reacted? Know the cause of your reaction as the best way to prevent another exposure is to avoid your allergic triggers.

F: Follow-up, as it is important for you to manage your allergies with the proper knowledge of your allergy through testing and diagnosis and ongoing management.

E: Epinephrine is available in auto-injectors and should be administered at your earliest symptoms of a severe allergic reaction. Make sure you carry your epinephrine auto-injectors with you and those you are with know how to use the auto-injector. Liquid Benadryl® should also be taken if able to swallow after the administration of epinephrine.

Most common triggers of anaphylaxis

- food
- insect sting
- medication
- latex.

Other important tips

- Wear a medic alert bracelet
- Carry 2 doses of Epinephrine with you. You might need a second dose if your symptoms don't improve in 15 minutes.
- Always proceed to the ER or your doctor after you have injected ipenephrine.

Are you **SAFE**? The American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) and the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) teamed up to create this message to educate those with food allergies and to raise awareness in order to help prevent death as a result of anaphylaxis (an allergic emergency). Immediate medical attention can help prevent deaths from anaphylaxis.

S: Seek medical attention by calling 911 as soon as you have identified that you or someone you know is having a severe allergic reaction. Symptoms of anaphylaxis include:

Hives, itchiness & redness on skin, lips or anywhere on your body

- Wheezing and/or difficulty breathing
- Swelling of the tongue, throat or nose
- Nausea, stomach cramping and vomiting or diarrhea

More Info

- www.acaai.org
- www.foodallergy.org
- www.medicalert.org
- www.latexallergyresources.org

EDUCATION is a key part of being in CONTROL of our asthma!



Winter is Here

The spring, summer and fall pollens have left us. If you are allergic to these pollens, you are rejoicing! However, the winter or indoor allergy season is in full bloom. Indoor allergies tend to cause havoc in the winter time, as we spend more time indoors and close up the house. Mold, dust mites, pet dander are some examples to name a few. Here is a reminder of things that you can do to minimize your exposure to these allergens to help alleviate your allergy and asthma symptoms during the winter, indoor season!

- Minimize dust collectors—curtains, stuff animals and knickknacks in your bedroom.
- Wash your bedding in HOT water weekly.
- Encase your pillows, mattress & box spring in ant-allergic covers to lower dust mite exposure.
- Use double thickness vacuum cleaner bags and/or a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
- Use a HEPA room filter.
- Consider replacing the carpet in bedrooms with a smooth surface flooring.

- If you are allergic to pets, keep them out of your bedroom, bathe them every 2 weeks, or find them a new home.
- Keep the humidity level in your house between 20 and 40 percent. Use a humidity gauge. Avoid using humidifiers. Over humidification can cause mold growth and help dust mite levels increase. Use your bathroom & kitchen fans to reduce humidity.
- Cover heating vents with an air filter.

When you do go outside, keep your asthma in control by warming the air you breathe by wearing a scarf or mask over your nose & mouth. Don't forget, MDI's (not HFA type) can freeze! Keep them with you tucked inside of your coat to stay warm. (If you have an epinephrine auto injector, ditto this suggestion, as you can not inject an ice cube through a needle!)

Remember, exercise is a trigger that you do not want to avoid. Stay active and diligent during the winter season. It's the beauty of our state!

AAFA Alaska thanks these premier sponsors for their support of AAFA Alaska's first asthma & allergy conference:

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Revised October 2006: Asthma & Allergy Essentials for Child Care Providers

PARTICIPANTS CAN USE THE TRAINING CERTIFICATE FOR THREE CDA HOURS IN HEALTH AND SAFETY

New revision includes more information on Food Allergies. This three (3) hour course gives child care providers the tools and knowledge they need to care for children with asthma and allergies and provide a safe and healthy environment for children with these chronic conditions.

Program Fee for Child Care Centers: \$25. Plan to present this program annually to your staff! Call today to schedule a class: (907) 696-4810 or E-mail: aafaAlaska@gei.net.



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