

Allergies and Asthma

Allergies and asthma: They often occur together.

May is national asthma and allergy awareness month. To help understand the connection between the two, a Mayo clinic specialist, James T. Li, M.D., explains the relationship in the following article.

May allergy and asthma sufferers may wonder what the two have in common besides a maddening ability to make one miserable. Allergies and asthma often occur together. In fact, allergic asthma (allergy-induced asthma) is the most common type of asthma in the United States.

If a person has both allergies and asthma, the same substances that trigger allergy symptoms can also inflame asthma, leading to asthma symptoms such as shortness of breath, wheezing and chest tightness.

For many people with asthma, their symptoms are triggered by an allergy to airborne substances such as pollen, dust mites or pet dander. In some people, skin or food allergies can cause asthma symptoms.

How does an allergic reaction cause asthma symptoms?

An allergic response affects the lining of the nose and the lining of the airways in a similar way. Symptoms occur when antibodies in your blood are exposed to an allergy-causing substance (allergen). These antibodies can trigger allergy symptoms such as nasal congestion, scratchy eyes or a skin reaction — and for many, inflammation of the airways associated with asthma.

For example, if your immune system produces allergy antibodies when you are exposed to cats, you are said to have a cat allergy. Proteins in cat fur or cat dander trigger the release of chemicals that cause inflammation and swelling in the lining of the nose. If you have allergic asthma, your reaction to cat fur or dander can also cause the lower airways to become inflamed, triggering asthma symptoms.

If I treat my allergies, will it prevent asthma?

Some allergy treatments can reduce asthma symptoms. Allergy shots treatment (immunotherapy) can help treat asthma by gradually reducing your immune system response to allergens that cause your asthma symptoms.

If you have allergic asthma, avoiding substances that trigger your symptoms can reduce asthma and in some cases, control it completely.



Are allergies and asthma treated differently?

Some medications work for both allergies and asthma, but may be taken differently. Using corticosteroids as an example—as a spray into your nose it reduces inflammation from hay fever, applied as a cream it helps skin inflammation, and inhaled into your lungs it reduces

inflammation of the bronchial tubes caused by asthma. Each application treats different conditions. Some pill form medications help symptoms caused by both allergies and asthma by regulating the immune system chemicals. Certain other medications are clearly more effective for one condition over another. Antihistamines, for example, are commonly used to treat hay fever but do not work well in treating asthma. Bronchodilator inhalers, which open congested airways, are a big part of asthma treatment, though they are not used to treat hay fever.

Who is at risk of allergic asthma?

A family history of allergies is a major risk factor for allergic asthma. Another risk factor is having hay fever or other allergies. More than one out of every four people who have hay fever also develops asthma. Though allergic asthma is the most common form of asthma, there are other forms and triggers of asthma, including exercise-induced asthma and nonallergic asthma triggered by infections or cold air or gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). Some people have asthma triggered by more than one type of trigger.

Take charge: Keep symptoms under control

If you have bothersome allergy and asthma symptoms, talk to your doctor about treatment. Recognizing the relationship between the body's immune system and how the airways react has led to improved treatment of asthma symptoms for many people.

Knowing your triggers, taking steps to avoid them, and working with your doctor to find the right treatment to manage your symptoms will help keep both your allergy and asthma symptoms under control.

Source: James T. Li, M.D.

Mayo Clinic EmbodyHealth Web Portal at www.bewellstaywell.az.gov





SAVE THE DATE!

The Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families is leading this year's Women's Health Week efforts. The week's culminating event will be our Annual Arizona Women's Health Expo & Conference and we hope you will join us.

The event will include free health screenings, valuable health information and fun raffle prizes.

What: Women's Health Expo & Conference

Date: May 15, 2009

Time: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- 2 Locations:**
- St. Joseph's Hospital**
(350 W. Thomas Rd, Phx)
 - The Wellness Community**
(360 E. Palm Ln., Phx)

For more information about Arizona's Women's Health Week activities and weekly health tips please visit:

http://gocyf.az.gov/Children/SP_WHW.asp

SKIN CANCER SCREENINGS

Protect Your Skin



Screening Includes

- **Assessment by a Nurse Practitioner or Physician's Assistant for skin cancer**
- AND**
- **Review of personal and family medical histories and lifestyle factors**

This month free skin cancer screenings will be held at the following locations. Registration is required. Each location has a site coordinator to take appointments.

Please review the full events schedule on the wellness website at: www.benefitoptions.az.gov to find out how you can make an appointment.

May 14 — Phoenix, DOE
205 N. Central Ave.
(8am—2:30pm)

May 26 — Tucson, DES
400 W. Congress, Rm 444
(9am—3:30pm)

May 28 — Phoenix, Aud. Gen.
2910 N. 44th St.
3rd Floor Conf. Room
(8am—2:30pm)



“Early detection is the best defense we have at this time for catching breast cancer in its earliest stages,” says Catherine Midgette, Executive Vice President of MOM. “If we find the cancer in its earliest stages, the patient has a 97 percent survival rate.” Mobile On-Site Mammography (MOM) travels to perform mammography screenings at worksites across Arizona.

MOM will directly bill insurance. Benefit Options health plan members do not have to pay a copay at these events. (Other insurance plan members may have a copay. Check with your insurance’s member services department for more information.)

Call MOM at 480-967-3767 to schedule your appointment.

This service is generally provided on a request-basis. Call MOM at 480-967-3767 or 1-800-285-0272 to schedule this service at your worksite. There is a minimum of 25 participants preferred.

- May 11 — Phoenix, RAES**
 4620 N. 16th St.
 (8am—1pm)
- May 11 — Phoenix, DOA**
 100 N. 15th Ave
 (8am—5pm)
- May 12 — Phoenix, DOI**
 2910 N. 44th St.
 (8am—5pm)
- May 18 — Tucson, ASDB**
 1200 W. Speedway
 (8am—1pm)
- May 18 — Tucson, AHCCCS**
 1010 Finance Center Dr.
 (1:45pm-5:00pm)
- May 19 — Phoenix, Att. Gen.**
 1275 W. Washington
 (8am—5pm)

Wellness Contracts Status Report

SCREENING SERVICES STATUS:
 Screening contracts were awarded on June 17th. Mobile Onsite Mammography, Healthwaves, Banner Occupational Health, and Maxim Health Systems are now under contract to provide convenient, at-work screening services. Wellness is currently taking requests for screenings at State worksites. Listed below are each companies services.

Healthwaves

- Flu/Pneumonia Vaccinations
- Mini Health Screening
- Osteoporosis Screening

Maxim Health Systems

- Flu/Pneumonia Vaccinations
- Mini Health Screening
- Osteoporosis Screening
- Skin Cancer Screening

Mobile Onsite Mammography

- Mammography Screening

Banner Occupational Health

- Skin Cancer Screening

EDUCATIONAL CLASSES STATUS:
 Wellness awarded contracts for educational classes, fitness classes, massage, and weight management on October 24th. Kronos Optimal Health, The Back Rub Co., and Jesse Tsao will be the State’s vendors providing services in the future. Wellness is working to complete the vendor implementation, but due to severe budget restrictions will not be able to offer the contracted services at this time. These programs will be placed on hold pending analysis from the ADOA budget team.

Thank you for your patience during this difficult budgeting period.

MOM

Mobile On-site Mammography

February Screening Schedule Continued

Call MOM at 480-967-3767 to schedule your appointment at any of the following locations

In the event, the minimum participation is not met, ADOA may cancel the MOM screening until adequate registration can be confirmed.

May 20 — Phoenix, Gaming
202 E. Earll Dr.
(8am—12pm)

May 20 — Phoenix, Att. Gen.
1275 W. Washington
(8am—5pm)

May 20 — Phoenix, Capitol
1700 W. Washington
(8am—5pm)

May 28 — Prescott, Pioneers Home
300 S. McCormick St.
(9am—5pm)

What Services & Programs are Offered by Benefit Options Wellness?

The Wellness website has the complete list of screenings, classes and other programs available for request and scheduling at State worksites.

Wellness events are requested and coordinated by State employees at worksites. If you are interested in hosting a program at your worksite, visit the Wellness website to view what is available and learn what Wellness has to offer.

Event requests must be submitted online by clicking this logo:



Complete the brief form, including contact information and the event requested and hit submit! A Wellness team member will reply to your request and begin scheduling your event.

Log on Today!

Take advantage of the many programs and services to keep employees healthy

Mini Health Screening at Work

All State employees and Benefit Options members are eligible to participate in mini health screenings.

The basic screenings below are FREE

- Height & weight; BMI; percent of body fat (body composition).
- Blood pressure
- Full Lipid Panel and blood sugar

Optional screenings include:

- Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) - for men
- Osteoporosis/Bone Density—for women



You will need your Employee Identification Number (EIN) and Insurance card for these events:

May 12 — Flagstaff, DOT
1801 S. Milton Rd., Room 140
(8am—10am)

May 14 — Tucson, AHCCCS
1010 N. Finance Center Dr.
Diamondback Conf. Room
(8am—9:30am)

For information about how to register for a specific mini health screening please refer to the online monthly schedule listed by county on the wellness website at www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness or call 602-771-9355

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