

WEST WINDSOR HEALTH DEPARTMENT

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF WEST WINDSOR, ROBBINSVILLE AND HIGHTSTOWN

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEWSLETTER

ALLERGIES ... DO YOU HAVE THEM?



If you are one of the approximately 60 million Americans who suffer from allergies, you know the reality of a life of sneezing, stuffed-up nose coughing and itchy, watery eyes.

At least 10% of Americans have seasonal allergies, but many of them don't know what's happening to their bodies, or how to treat it. In addition allergens (any substance that causes an allergic reaction in your body) are present all year round in your home. Seasonal allergies when combined with allergens found in the home can make matters worse.

Outdoor allergens include pollens, mold and mildew, and pollutants. The most common allergens found in the home are dust and dust mites, mold and mildew, animal dander and saliva, and cockroaches.

Often symptoms of allergies can mimic those of a common cold. Keep a calendar of when your symptoms appear as well as the type, and severity, of symptoms you experience.

The following symptoms are typical (but not always) due to allergies:

- ü You do NOT have a fever or chills
- ü You have "cold" symptoms that are prolonged or last for many weeks
- ü You experience these symptoms when no one else in your house is sick
- ü You have symptoms that are repetitive or appear on a predictable basis. For example, symptoms that appear at the same time the dogwoods bloom each year.



- ü You have sinus headaches with pain generally located in the face.
- ü You feel wheezy or experience shortness of breath.
- ü You often sneeze 4 or 5 times in a row.
- ü You have trouble sleeping at night and/or you are tired for no apparent reason.
- ü You have dark circles or bags under your eyes.
- ü You have a discharge from your eyes, or frequent sties, cysts or tiny white scales on the lower edge of the upper eyelid.



If you suspect that you are experiencing allergy symptoms, you may want to see an allergist. An allergist can help determine your specific allergens through testing or more detailed questions, and then help you plan strategies for finding relief.

Once you determine which allergens cause you trouble ...**STAY AWAY FROM THEM** as much as possible.

Reduce your general exposure:

- ü Use a portable HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Arresting) air filter in your bedroom; they can remove 99.7% of dust, mold, pollen and pet dander from the air.
- ü Change your clothes and shower when you come in from outside. Pollen sticks to your hair and clothes and can aggravate your symptoms.



Take your shoes off at the door.

THE ALLERGY AND ASTHMA CONNECTION

- Ü Don't use carpets or rugs, especially in the bedroom. Use plastic or metal blinds and wash them often - cloth curtains collect dust.
- Ü Keep pets out of the bedroom ... and especially off the bed. In addition to dander, saliva and dust mites, pets carry pollen grains in from outside.
- Ü Wash all your bed linens weekly, including your pillows in hot water (103o Fahrenheit) to kill dust mites. Use hypoallergenic fiberfill pillows and mattress pads.
- Ü Consider using a HEPA or electrostatic filter in your furnace or air conditioner. For forced air systems, keep seasonal allergens out of rooms by covering the vents with a filter.
- Ü Clean your home and car air conditioners at the beginning of each allergy season.
- Ü Keep the windows closed and use an air conditioner (change the filter regularly).
- Ü Use a dehumidifier in damp areas to control mold and mildew. Don't sleep in basement level areas.
- Ü Watch the weather! Rain usually brings relief to pollen sufferers because it washes away the pollen particles. Mold sufferers do worse after a few rainy days because damp weather helps mold and mildew to grow.



For more information and a comprehensive list of allergy and asthma resources:

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases National Institutes of Health

www.niaid.nih.gov/factsheets/allergy.htm

Asthma is a chronic disease that affects the lungs' airways. In asthma, the inside walls of the airways are inflamed or swollen, allowing less air to flow through the lungs. About 20 million people in the U.S. have been diagnosed with asthma - nearly 9 million of them are children.



There is currently no cure for asthma. However, asthma can be controlled by taking medication and avoiding or limiting asthma triggers, including: outdoor and indoor pollution; cigarette smoke, respiratory infections; strenuous exercise; adverse weather conditions; hyperventilation; some foods, food additives and medications.



Allergic asthma is characterized by symptoms that are triggered by an allergic reaction. Allergic asthma is airway obstruction and inflammation that is partially reversible with medication. Allergic asthma is the most common form of asthma, affecting over 50% of the 20 million asthma sufferers. Over 2.5 million children under age 18 suffer from allergic asthma. Many of the symptoms of allergic and non-allergic asthma are the same (coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath or rapid breathing, and chest tightness). However, allergic asthma is triggered by inhaled allergens such as dust mite allergen, pet dander, pollen, mold, etc. resulting in asthma symptoms.



For more information:

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

<http://www.aafa.org>

Pediatric Asthma Coalition of New Jersey

www.pacnj.org ✦ (866) 722-6588

EATING RIGHT FOR A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight contributes to your overall health and well being. Losing even a few pounds or preventing further weight gain has health benefits.

Are you ready to make changes in your lifestyle and move toward a healthier weight? Here are some tips to get you started.

Know when you've had enough to eat. Quit before you feel full or stuffed. It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to get the message that your body is getting food. So, fast eaters—slow down and give your brain a chance to get the word.



Get plenty of fiber from fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains. Fiber can help you feel full longer and lower your risk for heart disease and type-2 diabetes.

Watch portion sizes to manage your calories.

Watching portion sizes is just as important as choosing the foods you eat when trying to maintain a healthy weight. Eating too much of even a healthy food can add unwanted fat and calories to your diet, so remember to be mindful the next time you decide to eat out.

Cook & eat at home. Cooking and eating at home can be much healthier than dining out. The meals can be prepared healthier than fast food, and portion sizes can be smaller and lower in fat, salt and sugar than what you find in a restaurant. Eating at home gives the entire family time to talk about their day and it can save you money, too!



Eat at least three meals a day and plan your meals ahead of time. Whether you're eating at home, packing a lunch or eating out, an overall eating plan for the day will help keep you on track and prevent over-eating.

Balance your plate with a variety of foods.

Half your plate should be filled with fruits and vegetables, about one fourth with lean meat, poultry or fish, and one fourth with grains. To round out your meal, add fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt or cheese.



Snack smart. Plan for nutritious snacks to prevent hunger between meals. Keep healthy snacks at work, in your backpack or car.



Reduce the amount of sugary drinks & foods you eat – they are EMPTY & EXTRA calories.

The average American child eats about **300 calories** of added sugar each day. The major food and beverage sources of added sugars, for Americans, are:

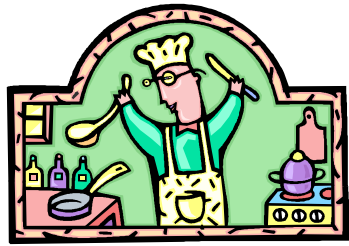
- non-diet soda, sweetened teas, energy & sports drinks (240-400 calories a serving)
- candy, cookies, cakes, pies, sweet rolls, donuts and sweetened cereals
- fruit drinks, fruit punch & 100% juice
- ice cream and popsicles
- ketchup, salad dressing, syrup, jam & jelly



Everyone must choose one of two pains:
The pain of discipline or the pain of regret. ~ Jim Rohn

20 WAYS TO LOWER THE FAT IN YOUR COOKING

1. Use nonstick cookware to reduce the amount of butter or oil used to cook



2. Use cooking spray instead of butter or oil; or at least choose liquid oils over solid fats (preferably canola oil or olive oil)
3. Use herbs, spices, fruits and salsas to flavor your food. You can grow your own herbs in a window pot
4. Add vegetables, beans, brown rice or barley to replace some of the meat or chicken content of recipes
5. Substitute 2 to 3 meat dishes each week for fish or vegetarian meals
6. Replace some of the fat in baked goods with a fruit puree like applesauce or use creamy plain nonfat Greek style yogurt. To make your own thick yogurt simply put some non-fat yogurt into a cheesecloth or coffee filter and basket and let the liquids drain out.
7. Substitute reduced fat cheeses for full-fat ones, and cut the amount you use
8. Choose reduced fat sour cream or yogurt instead of full-fat versions for dips and spreads.
9. Use reduced fat or fat-free cream cheese for cheesecakes.
10. Bake rather than fry breaded foods - breading absorbs fat as it fries.

11. Coat skinless chicken and fish in bread-crumbs (Japanese-style Panko is light & crispy) rather than batter, spray lightly with oil and bake rather than fry
12. Top your pies or line your tarts with phyllo dough instead of regular pastry
13. Use fat-free chicken broth or fat-free milk in mashed potatoes, soups, gravies and stews
14. Grill, broil, bake, braise, steam, poach, and microwave foods instead of frying them. Sauté with a minimal amount of oil, or use nonstick spray or broth instead
15. Oven-fry your potatoes instead of deep frying or buying French fries
16. Choose extra-lean meats and chicken or turkey breasts (cook with skin on and remove before serving). Cook lower fat meats and poultry very slowly to retain moisture and make them tender.
17. Choose chicken or turkey sausages instead of pork or beef sausages
18. Choose Canadian bacon or turkey bacon instead of regular bacon
19. Trim all visible fat from meat. Drain fat from cooked meats and blot them with a paper towel
20. Use fat-free evaporated milk in cream soups and pies instead of heavy cream.

