

fresh AAIR™



Asthma and Allergy Information Resource • Spring 2004

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Spring Cleaning

There's no better time than springtime, but for people with asthma and allergies, it can be a stressful time, too. Stepping outside means exposure to pollen, polluted air and more. Even staying indoors for housecleaning chores can present a risk for people affected by dust mite allergen, pet dander and chemicals in some cleaning products. Asthma and allergies severely limit the lives of more than 60 million Americans. AAFA helps people by providing information about prevention and treatment of these diseases. But to continue these services, we need your financial support. Please consider donating to AAFA online at www.aafa.org, or designating Agency #1734 when you make your CFC or United Way contributions this year. Together, we help people have a "life without limits."

Best wishes for good health.
 Ben Hadden – AAFA President



Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America®

Knoxville Rated Top Asthma Capital™

Study shows asthma is a problem in every major city. From Scranton, PA to Sacramento, CA, asthma has a significant impact on every major city in the United States, according to a new research-based ranking by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA). The 2004 Asthma Capitals™, identified and ranked based on key environmental, medical and health-outcomes factors, lists the worst cities in the U.S. for people with asthma.

"This list gives us qualitative evidence of how prevalent asthma is across the country – it's not just a problem for the mega-cities," said Ben Hadden, AAFA president. "Asthma has increased twofold in the past two decades, and we are seeing an alarming lack of control among many asthma sufferers, which points to the need for education."

This is the first year for the Asthma Capitals™ rankings, and AAFA will continue to conduct the research and release the rankings each year. AAFA hopes

that cities see the rankings as an opportunity to improve the environment and increase services for people with asthma.

"Asthma isn't just a problem for the 'mega-cities'"

The top ten 2004 Asthma Capitals™ are:

1. Knoxville, TN
2. Little Rock, AK
3. St. Louis, MO
4. Madison, WI
5. Louisville, KY
6. Memphis, TN
7. Toledo, OH
8. Kansas City, MO
9. Nashville, TN
10. Hartford, CT

A complete list of cities and more about the research methodology is available at www.AsthmaCapital.com.

The impact asthma has on America is huge in terms of social and financial costs.



“When it comes to our health, we need to do better than average.”



Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America®

freshAAIR™ is published bimonthly by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA). AAFA, founded in 1953, is the leading national patient and consumer organization helping people with asthma and allergic diseases through education, advocacy and research. Information in this newsletter is never a substitute for professional medical care. Any reference to products or procedures should not be construed as an endorsement. AAFA, including all parties associated with *freshAAIR™*, will not be held responsible for any action taken by readers as a result of the newsletter. All rights reserved. Material may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher.

AAFA Editorial Staff

Bill McLin
Executive Director
Mike Tringale, MSM
Director of Marketing and Communications
Angel Waldron
Marketing Communications Coordinator
Carey Simon
Contributing Writer

1233 20th Street, NW
Suite 402
Washington, DC 20036
p.202.466.7643
www.aafa.org
info@aafa.org
1.800.7.ASTHMA

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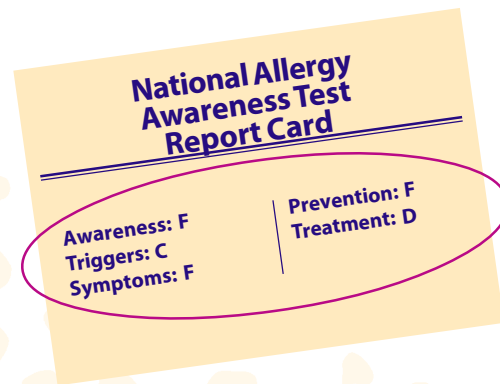
U.S. Doesn't Make the Grade on "National Allergy Awareness Test"

Allergy sufferers need to "study" this spring.

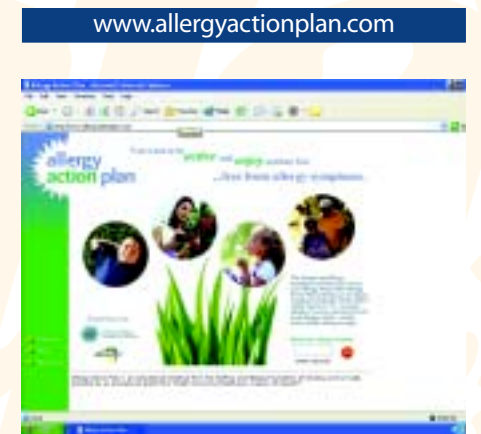
According to results from our first National Allergy Awareness Test, allergy sufferers scored average to failing grades in the areas of awareness, triggers, symptoms, prevention, and treatment of allergies. Results from the Test show that allergy sufferers think they are knowledgeable about allergies, but there is a gap between what they know and the actual impact allergy symptoms have on their lives.

More than 1,000 interviews were conducted with seasonal allergy sufferers and a segment of non-allergy sufferers about their awareness and knowledge of seasonal allergies. Sufferers were asked questions about allergy awareness and additional questions about personal habits, practices, related causes, management and treatment of allergy symptoms. On the whole, results of the survey show that Americans just don't make the grade, receiving average to failing scores. "When it comes to our health, we need to strive to do better than average," said Mike Tringale, spokesperson for AAFA. "To raise the allergy awareness

grade, Americans need to learn how to prevent, manage and treat their symptoms better."



Visit www.allergyactionplan.com for more information about the National Allergy Awareness Test and to develop your personal Allergy Action Plan, use the interactive self-screening tool, sign up for free allergy e-mail alerts and more.



Ask THE ALLERGIST™

Your Questions, AAFA's Answers.

Question — I have cat and dog allergies, but my daughter really wants a pet. Is it true that there are hypoallergenic dogs?

Answer — *There is quite a bit of variability in dander from one dog to another. Some dogs shed less than others (Poodles, Westies and Bishons don't shed, for example). Bathing a dog regularly seems to help for some. But keeping dogs out of bedrooms is one of the best ways to keep pets from causing problems. Also, when it comes to picking out a dog, spend a couple hours with it so you can tell how you might react before you decide.*

Question — My 2-year-old son had "reactive airway disorder" as a baby. Now he is coughing and crying nearly every other day, and often hyperventilates. An allergist told me to use the nebulizer when he coughs, but should I also use it when he is crying? If so, it would be about every other day. Can he be on a daily medication at 2 years old or should I just continue with the nebulizer this often?

Answer — *I would ask your allergist about breathing treatments with albuterol. If that helps, then this suggests asthma, and I would encourage you to get him on preventative medications such as Singulair or Pulmicort, both of which are approved for age 2.*

Question — I have always had serious seasonal allergies, which I control with medication. However, since having a child 13 months ago, my moderate environmental allergies have

become severe. My symptoms are mostly related to my eyes, which itch all day and become puffy and wrinkled with dry patches. What are my options, aside from taking medication year round?

Answer — *You might be a good candidate for allergy shots (immunotherapy). Many allergy medications are completely safe for breast-feeding and pregnancy (if you decide to have another child). Work with a Board Certified Allergist in your area.*

Question — I have just been diagnosed as being allergic to parabens, but am having a hard time finding makeup and other products that don't contain it. Can you provide a list of products that are paraben free?

Answer — *Check Physician's Formula makeup and Almay.*

Question — I already know my four-year-old son has allergies, but we were recently around a dog, and it appeared my son suffered severe shortness of breath, complaints that he couldn't breathe, etc. This happened once before, again when he was around a dog. Our doctor indicated my son had a "bronchospasm" and recommended an antihistamine. Is this a one-time occurrence or the beginning of asthma?

Answer — *I strongly suspect that it is the beginning of asthma. Ask your doctor about having a bronchodilator, such as albuterol, to use when he has trouble breathing.*

“There is quite a bit of variability in dander from one dog to another.”



Submit your questions to "Ask the Allergist™" online at www.aafa.org in the "Ask the Allergist" section. Our expert is Jeff Wald, M.D., a board-certified allergist with Kansas City Allergy & Asthma Associates, P.A. He received his allergy, asthma and clinical immunology training at the National Jewish Medical and Research Center in Denver and received his board certification for allergy and clinical immunology in 1987. This information is not a substitute for a visit with your doctor. Always consult a medical professional before making changes or adjustments to your long-term asthma and allergy treatment plan.

Allergy Symptoms

Allergies are characterized by an overreaction of the immune system to certain substances ("allergens") that a person inhales (pollen, dust mites, etc.), eats (peanuts, shellfish, etc.), injects (bee stings, certain medicines, etc.) or touches (poison ivy, latex, etc.). Symptoms include:

- Sneezing
- Runny nose (clear discharge)
- Itchy nose or throat
- Coughing
- Skin rashes or hives

Asthma Symptoms

Asthma occurs when airways become temporarily blocked or narrowed due to exposure to allergens ("allergic asthma"), irritants, strenuous exercise, anxiety or other triggers. If an asthma attack is severe, a person may need emergency treatment. Symptoms include:

- Sudden shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Tight chest
- Wheezing or coughing

Asthma and allergies are serious chronic diseases affecting more than 60 million people in the United States. Both can be fatal. However, with proper management, people with asthma and allergies can lead healthy, productive lives. Visit www.aafa.org (and www.allergyactionplan.com) to find out more.

"This will increase funding for federal agencies fighting against asthma and allergies."

Research: Allergies are on the Map From Atlanta to Grand Rapids

New Spring Allergy Capitals™ revealed. Seasonal allergies are "on the map" once again as AAFA reveals the 2004 Spring Allergy Capitals™ — the most severe cities for people with allergies during spring. "If you live in a Spring Allergy Capital™ and you are an allergy sufferer, or if you plan to travel to one, you need to be prepared," said Dr. Derek Johnson, an allergist at Temple University Medical Center.

The Spring Allergy Capital™ rankings were determined based on a city's pollen levels, use of allergy medication, and the number of allergists in the metro area. This year, AAFA ranked 100 metro areas, compared to only 50 areas in 2003.

(Pollen Data provided by Pollen.com, a division of Surveillance Data, Inc.)

The top five Spring Allergy Capitals™ are:

1. Atlanta, GA
2. Augusta, GA
3. Louisville, KY
4. Charlotte, NC
5. St. Louis, MO

"There are allergens in every city, but there are things you can do to prevent your allergy symptoms wherever you are," said Dr. Johnson. "When prevention is not enough, allergy sufferers have the option of non-drowsy, 24-hour allergy medication, such as Alavert™ and Claritin®, that are available without a prescription. If your symptoms don't improve, you should see an allergist to discuss other treatment options."

To find out if you live in a Spring Allergy Capital™ and learn how to recognize, prevent and safely treat allergy symptoms, visit our Web site at www.allergyactionplan.com.

Advocacy: Congressional Budget Resolution Debated

In the first few weeks of March, Congress debated its fiscal year 2005 Budget Resolution.

In the Senate, a number of amendments were proposed to strengthen the outlook for public health spending. One of these proposals intended to raise revenue by increasing the tobacco tax; another sought more money by cutting government travel and administrative allowances. Each of these proposals, if passed, will help increase the level of funding next year for key federal agencies at the forefront of the fight against asthma and allergies.

At least three amendments were proposed to help preserve Medicaid and other important entitlement programs. As FreshAAIR went to press, at least one of these proposals had succeeded – an amendment by Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) was passed to restore \$11 billion in Medicaid spending cuts.

You can receive more in-depth monthly reports on AAFA public policy issues by contacting Mo Mayrides, AAFA Public Policy Director, at either 202.466.7643 x273 or by e-mail at mo@aafa.org.

Education: 'You Can' Program Helps Control Asthma

For parents and health professionals to teach children. "You Can Control Asthma" is a set of easy-to-read books – one for the family and one for children ages 6 to 12. Learn how to keep asthma attacks from starting, what to do when an asthma attack starts, how

to use peak flow meters, spacer and inhalers and more. Children have their own workbook (third grade reading level) that helps them make choices and feel more in control of their asthma. (Available in Spanish.)

Order Form:

Purchase a program kit today, and visit the "Education" section at www.aafa.org to learn about and order more than a dozen other educational programs about asthma and allergies.

How to Order:

Complete the order form below and mail to AAFA Catalog, 1233 20th Street, NW, Suite 402, Washington, D.C. 20036, or fax to 202.466.8940, 24 hours a day. Or, call toll-free 1.800.7.ASTHMA (1.800.727.8462), Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST. Or, order online at www.aafa.org.

Order #	Description	Quantity	Price	Total
B-001E	Family Book (English)		\$5.50 ea.	
B-002E	Kids Book (English)		\$5.50 ea.	
B-001S	Family Book (Spanish)		\$5.50 ea.	
B-002S	Kids Book (Spanish)		\$5.50 ea.	
Shipping/Handling				
Total				

Shipping:

Please allow three weeks for processing and shipping your order. AAFA is unable to ship to P.O. boxes. For Alaska, Hawaii, APO addresses and international orders outside of Canada or Mexico, please call AAFA for exact shipping/handling costs. For all other locations, please add the following shipping/handling fees to your total order, based on the size of your order:

Orders up to \$9.99	add \$2	\$100 to \$199.99	add \$12	2 nd Day Air	add \$12
\$10 to \$49.99	add \$4	\$200 to \$299.99	add \$16	Next Day Air	add \$24
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Payment Method:

- Check or money order enclosed, payable to AAFA
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Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Cardholder Name (please print): _____

Cardholder Signature: _____



AAFA on the Web

www.aafa.org

You can always find the latest information about asthma and allergies, watch free interactive educational videos and even "Ask the Allergist™" on our Web site.



Nationwide Asthma Screenings

The American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) is conducting free asthma screenings at more than 300 locations across the country. Visit www.allergy.mcg.edu or call 1.800.7.ASTHMA for more information.

Prevent Symptoms of Allergic Asthma at Home

Many of the things you can do to prevent symptoms of allergic asthma are the same things you do to prevent seasonal allergy symptoms. The best strategy is to remove the sources of allergens in your home (such as pets, dust mites, pollen, mold, etc.). But if you can't eliminate 100 percent of these sources, there are things you can do to reduce the level of allergens in your home:

- Wash bed linens in hot water once a week to kill dust mites
- Use effective room-size or whole-house air filtration systems
- Use mold-killing products to clean hard surfaces

Look for the AAFA Label

AAFA does not endorse commercial products, but look for our "label of truth" to help you recognize truthful product claims. Products with the AAFA Label have been reviewed by a panel of independent medical and scientific experts to ensure that claims are research-based and honest. Make sure you speak with your doctor before you buy any products.



2004 Asthma Capitals™ continued from cover

Additionally, the personal costs to asthma sufferers is even larger since asthma that is not under control can negatively affect the lives of people who have the disease:

- 14 million missed days of school
- 4.5 million missed days of work
- 100 million days of restricted physical activity
- 2 million emergency room visits
- \$14 billion in medical expenses and indirect costs
- 5,000 deaths annually

The first annual Asthma Capitals™ research, developed by AAFA, ranks

the top 100 U.S. metropolitan areas based on 15 different quantitative and qualitative factors that were reported and compiled during the previous 12-month period, including:

- Prevalence
- Mortality
- Outdoor air quality
- Smoking laws
- Number of prescriptions
- Number of asthma specialists

See the entire list at www.AsthmaCapital.com and visit www.aaafa.org for more free information about asthma.

What is "Allergic Asthma"?

Asthma is a chronic disease affecting more than 20 million Americans, and 60 percent of these people have "allergic asthma," asthma that is triggered by allergens such as pollen, dust mites, pet dander or mold spores. But many people are unaware of the root cause of allergic asthma – an antibody called immunoglobulin E, or IgE, which is an underlying trigger of allergic reactions that cause the release of histamine and other chemicals that trigger asthma symptoms. Traditional medications for asthma have focused primarily on treating the symptoms of asthma. However, further understanding of the role of IgE has led to new approaches in asthma management.

"We need to help people recognize whether or not they have allergic asthma," said Stanley Goldstein, MD, director of Allergy and Asthma Care of Long Island and director of Island Medical Research in Rockville Centre, NY.

AAFA and the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) believe that recognizing the common causes of asthma can lead to better control. The AAAAI has created a simple self-screener, available at www.aaaai.org/allergicasthma to help people assess whether they might have allergic asthma and show them how to locate an asthma specialist. Also, visit www.aaafa.org for thousands of pages of free information about asthma.

aaafa AROUND AMERICA

AAFA Chapter & Educational Support Group News

New England Chapter (www.asthmaandallergies.org)

AAFA's New England Chapter provides a telephone information line; support groups; training for health professionals; speakers and exhibits at health fairs; a teen scholarship essay contest; and a newsletter, Asthma and Allergy Bulletin. The Chapter raises funds for research and is involved in advocacy efforts for tobacco control and education, emergency personnel education, and more. The Chapter belongs to local asthma coalitions and the Healthy

Schools Network. The Chapter's annual fundraising activities include the "Breath of Spring" Gala and a Summer Golf Classic, participation in Community Health Charities of Massachusetts and the Combined Federal Campaign, and donations from individuals. For more information, contact the AAFA New England Chapter toll-free at 877.2.ASTHMA or by e-mail at aafane@aol.com. Visit their Web site at www.asthmaandallergies.org.



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AAFA CHAPTERS

AAFA Alaska Chapter
907.696.4810
www.aafaalaska.com

AAFA Florida Chapter
813.885.4484
www.aaflorida.org

AAFA Greater Kansas City Chapter
816.333.6608
www.aafakc.org

AAFA Maryland-Greater Washington, D.C. Chapter
410.653.2880 (toll-free 1.800.727.9333)
www.aaafa-md.org

AAFA Michigan Chapter
248.557.8050 (toll-free 1.888.444.0333)
aafamich@aol.com

AAFA New England Chapter
617-965-7771
www.asthmaandallergies.org

AAFA North Texas Chapter
817.297.3132 (toll-free 1.888.932.2232)

AAFA Oregon Chapter
503.524.2232
aafa-oregon@comcast.net

AAFA St. Louis Chapter
314.645.2422
www.aafastl.org

AAFA S.E. Pennsylvania Chapter
856.224.9547

AAFA Southern California Chapter
323.937.7859 (toll-free 1.800.624.0044)
www.aafasocal.com

AAFA Washington State Chapter
206.368.2866 (toll-free 1.800.778.2232)
www.aafawa.org

AAFA Educational Support Groups
Visit www.aaafa.org to find Educational Support Groups near you.



Common Food Allergies

Approximately four million children and adults in the United States suffer from a food allergy. If you are one of them, you know you have an extremely sensitive immune system that reacts to substances in some foods. The most common food allergies are milk, soy, eggs, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish.

With a few food allergies, a reaction is triggered from minutes to two hours after you consume the allergen. How soon and how severe the reaction is depends on how sensitive you are to the food, the amount consumed, other food consumed, the manner in which it is prepared (i.e., cooked or uncooked, seasoned or unseasoned), and any other medical problems you may have. A severe, life-threatening reaction (called 'anaphylaxis') is more common with allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, fish and eggs. But symptoms can also be less obvious and appear as mild eczema or hives.

- Read food labels to be sure of ingredients in products.
- In restaurants, ask about ingredients and don't be embarrassed to tell your server your allergy is serious.
- Bring your own food on airplanes when you travel.
- Ask your doctor if you should carry injectable epinephrine or an antihistamine.

Food allergies can be diagnosed by an allergist with skin or blood tests, and knowing the exact foods that trigger your allergies is an important part of your allergy care. Then, the most effective strategy for living with these allergies is awareness and avoidance of trigger ingredients. Visit www.aafa.org for more free information about food allergies.



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