

Spring 2010

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## What's new at SPA?

Be on the look out for a new breastfeeding class offered by SPA's lactation consultants. Eileen Bens, RN, CPNP and Shari Kehres, RN, CPNP will be providing a course for first-time mothers interested in breastfeeding and moms who previously did not nurse or had problems nursing. Participants can expect to learn breastfeeding techniques as well as helpful tips to prevent common breastfeeding problems. The two hour interactive course will cost \$25. Call our office for further details.

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*Spring is here and you and your child can finally say goodbye to cabin fever! As you get outside to enjoy the warm weather, budding trees, and blossoming flowers, keep in mind these tips to keep your child healthy and safe!*

## Allergic Rhinitis and Asthma: What you need to know

Allergic rhinitis (AR), commonly known as 'allergies', affects between 10 and 30% of all adults and as many as 40% of children. In 2006 alone, AR accounted for over 12 million physician office visits. Allergic rhinitis is caused by both indoor and outdoor allergens. Common culprits include mold, pollen, animal dander, dust mites, and cockroaches. Allergic rhinitis can be seasonal or one may have symptoms year-round. For many, allergy symptoms begin to flare in early spring, when trees begin to pollinate. Grass pollen is present in early summer and weed pollen (for example, ragweed) increases in late summer and fall.

Symptoms of AR include sneezing, itchy nose, throat, eyes, or ears, runny nose, congestion, and watery eyes. Management of AR may include allergen avoidance, medication, and for some severe cases, allergy shots.

### Tips to control indoor and outdoor allergens:

- Wash bedding weekly in hot water
- Encase pillows and comforters in allergy-proof fabric covers
- Clean windows, book shelves, and air conditioning vents where dust or mold may collect
- Keep humidity low to discourage mildew and mold growth; use a dehumidifier

- Use a vacuum with a HEPA (high efficiency particulate) filter
- Keep pets out of frequently used areas such as the bedroom
- Bathe pets often
- Keep windows closed and use air conditioning when able

• During high pollen count days, encourage your child to change his or her clothes immediately when coming inside and wipe off his or her face with a wet cloth

- Refrain from playing in the yard immediately after mowing the lawn or raking leaves, as these activities stir up pollen and mold



Asthma is the most common serious disease among children. At some point in their life, 9 million children under the age of 18 have been diagnosed with asthma in the U.S. The impact of this chronic disease is far-reaching and can affect the quality of a child's life if not managed correctly.

Asthma is a disease of the airway. During asthma exacerbations, the airway constricts and the lining of the airway inflames, making it difficult for air to flow freely. Children may start to cough, wheeze, complain of chest tightness, or have obvious shortness of breath. Asthma can be insidious as well, and may present as a nagging night-time cough or difficulty breathing with exercise. Common triggers include smoke, viral or bacterial infections, cold or dry air, strenuous exercise, allergies, and even emotional anxiety.

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## Do you know...

... Approximately 15% of spring-breakers are high school students? Spring break for many adolescents is synonymous with alcohol abuse and risky behavior. If your teenager is planning a sun-filled getaway with his or her friends this spring, it is important to be active in the preparation for the trip.

- Openly discuss your expectations and the expectations of your teen.
- Review the consequences of risky behavior. Vandalism, theft, rape, and assault commonly occur on spring break. The best prevention is to make smart choices.
- Coordinate with other parents to ensure you are all being consistent with the rules that you set.
- Safety in numbers! Remind your teen that the buddy system is a rule.
- Don't leave home without it: emergency phone numbers, cell phone and charger, copy of health insurance card, and sunscreen.
- Remind your teen: independence comes with responsibility!



*(Allergic Rhinitis and Asthma article continued)*

The diagnosis of asthma can sometimes be difficult as wheezing can be the result of multiple causes. Although there is no definitive test for asthma, a chest x-ray or spirometry may be utilized to help make the diagnosis. Spirometry is a test that measures lung function and can easily be performed during an office visit.

It is important for parents to understand that asthma is not just the acute episode of wheezing, it is a chronic process that must be managed even when the child seems well. Management of asthma includes trigger avoidance, rescue inhalers, and long term controller inhalers or oral medications. SPA provides its asthma patients with an asthma management plan to help parents follow guidelines specific to their child. Routine follow-up with the child's care provider is imperative to successful asthma control.

For more information on allergic rhinitis and asthma, visit the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology at [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org).

## Warm weather's most important accessory: the Bicycle Helmet



Warm weather is approaching and that can only mean one thing: time for outdoor play! Bicycling is a fun way to promote exercise and teach children important lessons about safety. Children need to learn that bicycles and helmets go hand-in-hand, and should be used together at all times.

### Bicycle Helmet Facts

- According to recent statistics, 5% of children admitted to Cincinnati Children's Hospital for trauma injuries received those injuries from a bicycle accident (Trauma Registry Program, 2009).

- Of those children, only 9% were wearing helmets.
- Helmets are designed for one impact only; if a bicycle injury involves the head, a new helmet should be purchased.
- Bicycle helmets are based on head size, not age. To measure helmet size, wrap a tape measure above the eyebrows and around the head. Bring this measurement (in inches) when shopping for a helmet.
- Bicycle helmets are effective for scooters and inline/roller skating, but a different helmet is required for skateboarding.
- Bicycle helmets and skateboard/rollerblade protective gear can be purchased through Children's Hospital for \$10-\$13. Call the Safety Resource Center at (513) 636-3139.

### Eyes, Ears, and Mouth Test: how to check for proper fit

- Eyes check: with the helmet positioned on your child's head, he should be able to see the bottom rim of the helmet when he looks up. The rim should be 1-2 finger-widths above the eyebrows.
- Ears check: the straps of the helmet should form a "V" under your child's ears when buckled. The strap should be snug but comfortable.
- Mouth check: have your child open his mouth as wide as he can; the helmet should hug his head.

### Bicycle Safety Rules:

- Parents are role models; this means parents must wear bicycle helmets too!
- Ride on the right side of the road with traffic.
- Use appropriate hand signals.
- Respect traffic signals and signs.
- Stop and look left, right, and left again before entering the street or crossing an intersection.
- Limit children under the age of 10 to riding on off-roads only (sidewalks and paths).
- No riding in the dark or fog.
- Wear reflective clothing and accessories, and add reflectors to the bicycle.

For more information on bicycle helmets and bicycle safety, visit [www.cchmc.org](http://www.cchmc.org) and [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org).