New Study Confirms Overuse of Decongestant Nasal Sprays Causes Rebound Congestion

With the plethora of available over the counter nasal sprays these days, many of those who have rhinitis are using these sprays on a daily basis for a long period of time. The result of this overuse can be rebound congestion of the nasal mucosa.

This vicious cycle of overuse and dependence can develop into a condition called rhinitis medicamentosa and can last for months or years.

A recent observational study published in The Journal of Allergy & Clinical Immunology, 895 participate completed a questionnaire to assess current symptoms, rhinitis medication and previous physician diagnosis. The study defined that nasal decongestant overuse was using it daily for at least one year.

The authors found that most of the patients suffered from moderate to severe rhinitis with nasal obstruction was their main symptom. They also found that the majority had a physician diagnosis of current symptoms and about half had consulted for rhinitis in the past year.

The most important finding of this survey was the high prevalence of nasal decongestant overuse – 49 percent – even though 80 percent of the participants were educated about the limit on duration of use. This risk of nasal decongestant overuse was also reduced when using other medications such as oral H1-antihistamines, intranasal steroids, and use of nasal saline.

Risk was also increased by:
- More severe blocked nose
- Longer duration of symptoms
- Presence of sleep disturbance
- Higher body mass index
- Prior advice to limit the duration of intranasal decongestant use.

The study drew attention to the problem that nasal decongestant overuse among those who are self-medicating their persistent rhinitis.

If you have been using an Over-the-Counter decongestant nasal spray regularly, and having issues with nasal congestion, please discuss with your OAAC Allergist.

Summertime Allergies

Love being outdoors but your eyes, nose and allergies don’t? As summer rolls around, grass pollen can cause sneezing, itchy eyes, congestion and other allergic reactions can turn your weekly yard work into a miserable experience.

Highly-allergenic grasses include Bermuda, Fescue, Johnson, Rye and Timothy. If you have these in your yard, you might want to consider wearing a mask to reduce the amount of pollen grains you might breathe in.

The best time of day to be outdoors are when pollen levels are lower – typically in the very early morning or the evening. Pay attention to the daily pol-

In the next issue of The Allergist learn more about

Sublingual Therapy
(under the tongue drops)
len counts. You can follow the OAAC on Facebook and on Twitter for daily reports or visit the website.

Don’t touch your eyes or face when doing yard work. Leave your gardening tools and your gloves and shoes outside to avoid bringing allergens indoors. Taking a shower after doing yard work will also help with reducing symptoms.

The best way to determine which allergens trigger your allergic reactions is through skin testing performed by an allergist. An allergist can help you formulate an effective treatment plan.

With the recent release of the Third National Climate Assessment (NCA) in May, American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) officials believe that climate change will play an even greater role in allergies and asthma than what was being reported.

The NCA report cited information concerning climate change and the affect it has on respiratory and allergic diseases which included a 2008 study that was published in AAAAI’s Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (JACI) that indicated increased carbon dioxide can elevate plant-based allergens production.

Researchers and physicians have been able to connect progressive climate changes to increasing rates of allergic sensitization in patients over long periods of time.

“While there are many factors contributing to the rise of allergies and asthma in the past decades, one face remains – prolonged pollen cycles, more frost free days and higher pollen levels lead to more cases of seasonal allergic rhinitis and more frequent emergency room visits for asthma sufferers,” said Elizabeth Matsui, M.D., chair of the AAAAI Environmental Exposures and Respiratory Health Committee.

**Outdoor Allergies and Climate Change**

Climate change is not good news for the millions of people worldwide who suffer from seasonal allergic rhinitis (hay fever) and allergic asthma. Increasing temperatures and carbon dioxide levels are causing seasons to arrive earlier according to studies on climate change. This actually results in pollination beginning earlier.

Pollen’s life span is less than two hours but its ability to produce an allergic reaction is potentially much longer. The best times to be outdoors are when pollen levels are lower which is typically on rainy, cloudy and windless days.

Steps to avoid outdoor allergens that trigger your symptoms:

- Keep windows in your home closed to prevent pollen from drifting into your home
- Keep your car windows closed to keep pollen out when traveling
- Don’t touch your eyes and face when you are gardening/wear goggles and mask while outside
- Shower after being outside – pollen can collect on your hair and skin
- Sinus irrigation will also help

Source: AAAAI

**Grass Allergy...**

(continued from page 1)

For years we have known that higher ambient carbon dioxide concentrations and warmer temperatures will result in increased pollen production,” said Jeffrey Demain, M.D., FAAAAI, vice chair of the AAAAI Environmental and Occupational Respiratory Diseases Interest Section. “In northern latitudes we are recording longer overall growing seasons, earlier start times and we expect to see more changes to the floristic zones. We are even finding the pollen grains themselves have a more potent allergic component.”
Get To Know Lacy De Nelson

When you see those pollen and mold counts each day either via the OAAC website, Twitter, Facebook or on TV, you can see some of Lacy’s handiwork. She is one of three certified pollen and mold spores counters for the OAAC. She has worked at the OAAC for five years and started as a medical assistant for one year before she moved to the clinical lab. Also, for any special testing – Lacy is the go to person. In addition, she is the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) contact person.

She was born in Oklahoma City but grew up in Yukon and graduated from Yukon High School. She joined the military at 17 in her senior year of high school and served 8 years in the Oklahoma Army National Guard. Lacy holds a degree as an x-ray medical technician from Heritage College. “I knew I wanted to go into the medical field,” said Lacy. “I originally wanted to be a physician’s assistant. After my last deployment in Iraq, I decided to go to X-Ray Medical Technician School.”

She got married in 2007 and they have a son named Dakota. They live in Yukon along with the rest of her family.

In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, hiking and going new places.

“I enjoy helping our patients feel better and helping figure out what is wrong with them,” said Lacy.

Did you know?

Eye Allergies
- Unlike the condition pink eye, symptoms caused by an eye allergy are not contagious.
- If your symptoms are related to an eye allergy, chances are you will have problems in both eyes.
- Eye allergies are annoying and uncomfortable, but they usually do not harm your eyes.

Washing Up
Kids With Food Allergies Foundation remind us that washing your hands (with a safe soap) is the best way to remove allergens. Instant hand sanitizer does not remove allergens; it just “kills” germs.

Pet Allergies
It isn’t your pet’s hair or fur that directly causes an allergic reaction or aggravates asthma. It is the protein found in a pet’s dander, skin flakes, saliva and urine.

AllergyEats Releases 2014 List of Most Allergy-Friendly Restaurant Chains

Updated List Spotlights Restaurants That Excel at Accommodating Food-Allergic Diners

AllergyEats, the leading guide to allergy-friendly restaurants, has just released its 2014 list of Most Allergy-Friendly Restaurant Chains nationwide.

The chains on this list hold the highest ratings on AllergyEats’ website and smartphone app, per feedback from the food allergy community.

AllergyEats restaurant ratings are based solely on how well restaurants have accommodated food-allergic diners, as opposed to other review sites that measure restaurants’ ambiance, service or food quality.

For the list, go to www.allergyeats.com
**Back to School Planning**

It’s not too early to start thinking about back to school planning if your child has been diagnosed with asthma or allergies. A written action plan can help your child have a better year at school. Children using these plans also missed less school, had less nighttime awakening and had improved symptom scores. Symptom based plans can significantly reduce the risk of the need of an acute care visit. Any required medication forms or other forms that need to be filled out ahead of time, please be sure and consult your OAAC allergist before school starts.

During the summer, make sure your child continues to take his or her asthma or allergy medications as prescribed. Routines are important and skipping medications can lead to an increase in symptoms and possibly missing school days.

If your child is at risk for life-threatening reactions, such as food or insect sting reactions, complete an Anaphylaxis Action Plan and show school staff how to administer autoinjectable epinephrine.

In the classroom, there are many potential asthma and allergy triggers in schools. It is important that your child’s allergies have been accurately diagnosed in order to determine what allergens to avoid.

If your child has exercise-induced asthma, please visit with your doctor and school staff to formulate a good action plan for your child. It is never too early to start planning so that your child will have a successful school year.

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**ABC POTATO SALAD**

**M, E, W, P, S and N**

Key: M=Milk-free; E=Egg-free; W=Wheat-free; P=Peanut-free; S=Soy-free; N=Nut-free

Ingredients:

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- 1 lb red potatoes
- 1 lb Yukon gold (or other “buttery”) potatoes
- 1 bundle asparagus spears (approximately 1 lb)
- ½ cup olive oil
- ½ cup balsamic vinegar (regular or white)
- 2 T Dijon mustard
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste
- 1 T dried dill (optional)
- 1 T dried basil (optional)

Great Summer Recipe for Food Allergy Patients

**Directions:**

Cook the chicken in whatever manner you prefer. Cut cooked chicken into bite-sized pieces. Cool slightly. While the chicken is cooking, wash the potatoes and cut into bite-sized pieces. Steam them for about 8 minutes (they will not be tender yet).

While the potatoes are steaming, prepare, wash and trim the asparagus. Cut asparagus spears into 2-inch pieces. After the potatoes have cooked for 8 minutes, add the asparagus and continue to steam for another 7 minutes until the asparagus is tender (15 minutes total for the potatoes). Cool slightly. While the asparagus is cooking, prepare the dressing. Whisk together the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, Dijon mustard, salt, pepper, and either the dill or basil. In a large bowl, combine the chicken, potatoes, asparagus and dressing. Toss to coat. Add additional dill or basil if you would like more flavor. Can be served warm or cold. Serves 4-6.

Reproduced courtesy of Kids With Food Allergies

Created by rachelandtyke

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**Allergies Have a Genetic Component**

If only one parent has allergies of any type, chances are (1 in 3) that each child will have an allergy. If both parents have allergies, it is much more likely (7 in 10) that their children will have allergies.

Source: Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America