

# THE Allergist

A NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA ALLERGY &amp; ASTHMA CLINIC

Fall 2011

## Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic Welcomes Dr. Laura Chong

The Oklahoma Allergy and Asthma Clinic welcomes Dr. Laura Kimberly Chong who is joining the staff. She is board certified in Internal Medicine and Allergy & Immunology. Dr. Chong received her bachelor of arts degree in Psychology with a minor in Biology with honors. She was conferred with her doctor of medicine from the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine in 2004.

Her postdoctoral training included completing an internship and residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics. Dr. Chong served as Primary Care Chief Resident July 2007 to June 2008. She recently completed a fellowship at the



*Dr. Laura Chong,  
Board Certified Allergist*

Johns Hopkins University Department of Medicine, Division of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. Johns Hopkins University Internal Medicine Program was ranked #1 in the United States by US News and World Report in 2011 and tied with Harvard Medical School for that top rating.

Dr. Chong presented abstracts at the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology conferences on the Efficacy of Portable Air Filters in Reducing Airborne Mouse Allergen levels in 2009, and Environmental Mouse Allergen Challenge in Urban Adults with Asthma in 2011.

Dr. Chong was the primary author on the article published in *Asthma and Allergy Proceedings* titled "Evaluation of Diagnostic Tests for Mouse Allergy in Urban Adults with Asthma" in November 2010.

While at Johns Hopkins University, Dr. Chong presented at conferences on topics including Rituximab: Infusion Reactions and Desensitization, Allergic Bronchopulmonary Aspergillosis, Eosinophilic Bronchitis, Angioedema and Chronic Urticaria, among several other topics.

Dr. Chong is a member with the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma

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## Get Your Flu Shot Now!

What is the single best way to protect against the flu? Roll up your sleeves and get a flu vaccination. The physicians at the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic recommend patients get an influenza vaccine. Those who are particularly at risk, such as people with chronic diseases like asthma, should talk to their OAAC physician about their relative risk.

The following groups should get vaccinated because they are at high risk of having serious flu-related complications or because they live with or care for people at high risk for developing flu-related complications:

- Pregnant women
- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- People 50 years of age and older
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu

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## Oops, We Did It Again

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America ranked Oklahoma City and Tulsa fifth and 10th, respectively, on its list of the worst cities for fall allergies. Other cities rounding out the top ten were: Knoxville, Tenn. #1; Dayton, Ohio #2; McAllen, Texas #3; Jackson, Miss. #4; Louisville, KY #6; Wichita, Kansas #7; Madison, Wisc. #8, and St. Louis, MO #9.

# New Surgery Could Help Asthmatics Breathe Easier

A new surgery to treat asthma is bringing easier breathing for asthmatics. For those who have chronic asthma, many develop a thickening of the smooth muscle lining the airways. This new procedure called bronchial thermoplasty (BT) can reduce the size of the smooth muscle that will allow many patients to cut back on the medication they take and hopefully, lead to more active lives. It has been approved by the FDA for the treatment of severe persistent asthma in patients 18 years and older.

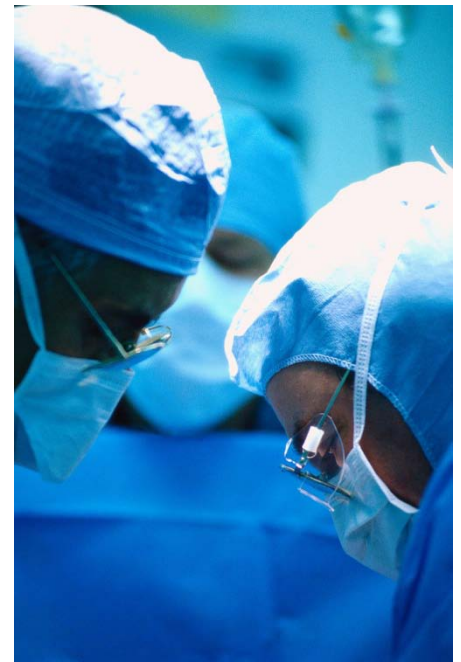
Asthma affects about 22 million people in the United States. Its primary cause is inflamed airways in the lungs. This inflammation makes the airways smaller, which makes it more difficult for air to move in and out of the lungs causing coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath. Asthma can range in severity from an occasional occurrence to chronic, life-threatening attacks. Exercise, allergies and airborne dust and

other irritants can cause an asthma attack.

BT delivers thermal energy to the airways of the lungs. By reducing airway smooth muscle, the airways are not able to constrict as well and the frequency of asthma attacks is reduced. Electrodes on the tip of the bronchoscope are heated with radiofrequency energy which shrinks the muscle and creates a larger opening in the airway.

This procedure is performed under moderate sedation or light anesthesia and is minimally invasive. It is performed over three outpatient visits, each treating a different area of the lungs. Patients continue to take their standard maintenance asthma medications.

In a recently published study, the AIR2 trial, BT had a number of clinical benefits for severe asthmatics. It was demonstrated to improve their asthma quality of life, reduce the frequency of asthma attacks by 32 percent, reduce emergency room visits for respiratory



symptoms by 84 percent, reduce hospitalizations for respiratory symptoms by 73 percent, and reduce missed work or school days due to asthma by 66 percent.

For more information about this procedure, visit with your OAC allergist.

## Get Your Flu Shot...

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The flu shot is approved for use in people older than 6 months including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.



There are three different flu shots available:

- **A regular flu shot approved for**

**people six months and older**

- **A high dose flu shot approved for people 65 and older**
- **An intradermal (small needle, under the skin) flu shot approved for people 18 to 64 years of age**
- **The nasal spray flu vaccine is approved for use in healthy people 2 through 49 (this should not be given to patients with asthma)**

When should you get vaccinated? Generally, people should get the seasonal flu vaccine as soon as it is available. Vaccination is best before December since the timing ensures that protective antibodies are in place before flu activity is at its highest. However, people can receive the vaccination from October and as late as May.

Over the course of the flu season, many different influenza viruses can circulate at different times and in differ-

ent places. As long as flu viruses are still spreading in the community, vaccination can provide protective benefits.

If you are allergic to eggs, should you receive the flu vaccine? If you are severely allergic to eggs, you should not receive the influenza vaccine until you can talk to your OAC physician. If you can tolerate eating eggs cooked in things, then you should be able to tolerate the vaccine without a problem.

If you do contract influenza and you have asthma, it is important that you maintain good control of your asthma.

What if you get the flu before you get vaccinated? Contact your Primary Care Provider or OAC physician early because some treatments are available that are effective in treating the flu but must be started at the early onset of the virus.

## New Patients?



The OAAC staff welcomes new patients! New patients experience a relatively short waiting period because of the large amount of allergists available.

OAAC's staff is extremely patient-friendly and focused on customer service. With satellite offices in Edmond, Norman, North Oklahoma City, and then the main location on the Oklahoma Health Center campus, the OAAC has the staff, the technology and the desire to help all allergy and asthma patients. Visit the website at [www.oklahomaallergy.com](http://www.oklahomaallergy.com) to see addresses for all OAAC locations and make your initial appointment. Call today – (405) 235-0040.

“The Allergist” is published quarterly by the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic. Contents are not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained directly from a physician.

“The Allergist” welcomes your letters, comments or suggestions for future issues.

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## Why Choose the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic?

Looking for expert care with knowledgeable physicians and staff that are in the forefront of their profession? Look no further than the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic. Established in 1925 as the Balyeat Hay Fever and Asthma Clinic, the clinic named for its founder – Ray M. Balyeat, M.D. who was a true pioneer in the specialty of allergy and asthma medicine.

The practice was renamed in 1954 as the Oklahoma Allergy Clinic, and then 40 years later became the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic.

As one of the oldest, largest, most respected and advanced allergy and asthma centers in the United States, the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic is dedicated solely to the diagnosis and management of allergies, asthma and other allergic disorders. From the most complicated issues to the occasional allergic outbreak, the physicians at OAAC are equipped with the latest treatment advances, the knowledge and the experience to best help solve each problem.

Who should seek out an allergist?

Today, allergens are everywhere. From Oklahoma's blowing winds, to molds, to tree pollen, people are suffering. They miss work. They miss school. Over the counter treatments are just masking the symptoms. Asthma is also affecting more people across the United States each year. About 90 percent of children and 50 percent of adults with asthma have allergies that trigger asthma symptoms. Identifying and learning to control these allergies can be the key to better asthma control.

With proper medical treatment, your asthma and allergy symptoms should not:

- interfere with daily activities
- wake you up at night
- cause you to wheeze during strenuous physical activities
- cause you to miss work or school
- send you to the emergency room.

Allergists are Board Certified internists/Pediatricians who have additional training in the immune system and special skills in evaluating and treating

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*The staff at the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic offer the latest, cutting edge treatments and solutions for patients.*

## Keep Your Holiday Gatherings Allergy Free

Family gatherings are an important part of the holiday season each year. But if you have a food allergy, you have to be extra careful to mix the right amount of fun and the right kind of food. It's difficult especially when you are an invited guest. Here are some tips for managing your food allergy during the holidays:

- Plan an active role as a participant by assisting in planning the menu and making suggestions for your favorite allergy-free meal items
- Arrive early so that you can help cook and you can read label to watch for allergy-causing ingredients
- Talk to your host about cross-contact – when an allergy-free food comes into contact with an allergy-containing food and this will pick up allergy-containing proteins which could be invisible to the human eye.
- Bring a dish to share or two and a dessert you've prepared so that you know it is safe for you to consume.
- Fried foods should probably be avoided unless you can know for sure that foods containing allergy-causing ingredients were not fried in the same oil.
- Be careful about eating sauces, desserts, pastries and dishes with multiple ingredients because they could have unexpected ingredients like peanuts, tree nuts or milk.

Your host probably does not know that some foods contain common allergy-causing ingredients. Margarine may contain soy and milk. If the turkey is basted with margarine, this could cause a reaction if someone has a milk or soy allergy and eats the turkey.

Communicate with your host in advance to discuss your food allergy and remember how challenging allergy-free cooking can be at first. By prior planning and offering your assistance, this will make it easier for everyone.

Happy Holidays from the OAAC staff!

## FALL 2011 Puzzle

answer key is on the OAAC website [www.oklahomaallergy.com](http://www.oklahomaallergy.com)

Z	G	C	R	P	E	A	N	U	T	S	L	M	J	F	O	K	K	T	O	ADULTS
V	N	G	J	M	B	B	X	X	N	O	I	T	A	N	I	C	C	A	V	ALLERGY
V	S	E	A	S	L	U	T	S	B	Q	O	E	U	G	M	I	F	T	I	ASTHMA
L	I	W	R	E	X	G	J	L	Q	T	F	E	P	L	O	B	N	P	N	BOARD CERTIFIED
L	S	Z	K	D	D	E	I	F	I	T	R	E	C	D	R	A	O	B	F	BRONCHIAL
A	O	Y	L	R	L	L	A	U	R	A	M	B	G	R	V	M	D	E	L	CHILDREN
M	N	T	S	W	P	I	P	A	N	K	L	I	M	V	K	Z	L	D	U	CHONG
R	G	S	F	Q	S	R	H	S	T	S	I	N	R	E	T	N	I	O	E	DIAGNOSIS
E	A	A	S	T	H	M	A	C	E	U	E	U	T	P	F	L	K	B	N	HAYFEVER
D	I	L	G	R	T	C	L	D	W	G	W	T	W	B	L	L	U	K	Z	HOLIDAYS
A	D	P	G	E	J	S	L	S	I	H	O	I	R	A	A	G	M	U	A	INFLUENZA
R	K	O	G	O	Z	T	E	M	G	Z	O	O	B	H	S	Q	U	V	U	INTERNISTS
T	R	M	C	Q	L	L	R	Z	N	C	N	L	O	F	J	I	J	T	A	INTRADERMAL
N	S	R	I	J	T	U	G	O	O	C	V	M	I	N	Y	C	C	Y	P	LAURA
I	B	E	A	I	R	D	Y	V	H	D	A	M	N	D	F	C	Y	E	E	MILK
D	O	H	N	N	H	A	O	I	C	C	F	P	X	Y	A	D	T	M	C	OKLAHOMA CITY
W	O	T	A	L	Q	B	A	T	I	H	W	X	T	K	D	Y	W	I	I	PEANUTS
B	L	W	P	Z	D	L	D	T	T	U	R	K	E	Y	F	T	S	B	D	PEDIATRICIANS
W	V	Q	Z	R	F	A	Y	D	R	E	V	E	F	Y	A	H	V	B	X	THERMOPLASTY
C	Y	U	W	I	P	E	D	I	A	T	R	I	C	I	A	N	S	X	T	TULSA
																				TURKEY
																				VACCINATION

## OAAC...

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asthma and allergist. All OAAC's physicians are board certified with the American Board of Allergy Immunology. To become board certified, they must pass an examination in the specialty area of allergy and immunology. Because allergists tend to see more allergic and asthmatic people than other kinds of doctors, they are more experienced in treatment.

Patients come to the OAAC from across the southwest. It is the practice of choice for the treatment of allergies and asthma. Please tell your friends and family members about the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic. We are here to help everyone feel better!

## Dr. Chong...

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and Immunology and American College of Asthma, Allergy Immunology.

Dr. Chong resides in Edmond with her husband. Her hobbies and interests include reading, biking, modern art, architecture, movies, music, swimming and exploring local cuisine.