



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

June 2019

HEALTH TIP



FITNESS FOCUS **MANAGING** **ALLERGIC REACTIONS**

The 1-2 punch to minimizing allergic reactions is to reduce allergen exposure and minimize the reaction with medication. The ladder of therapeutic allergy medications is described below.

- Mild and occasional allergy symptoms can be successfully treated with oral anti-histamines like Claritin / Zyrtec / Allegra. A caution on Benadryl use – it is a great antihistamine but it lasts only 4-6 hours and usually is VERY sedating.
- Moderate to severe allergy symptoms can be treated with nasal steroid sprays like Flonase or Nasonex. The steroid sprays have become the “gold standard” treatment for allergies because they help to decrease the underlying inflammation helping to prevent the allergy attack in the first place. Montelukast (Singulair) may also be helpful for treating allergy symptoms. This medication now comes in an inexpensive generic form.
- Severe allergies can be treated with immunotherapy injections which can be highly effective... but injections also require a very significant commitment of time and money. Oral (sublingual) immunotherapies are emerging and may change immunotherapy in the very near future.

Contact your doctor to discuss the best treatment option(s) for you.

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SEASONAL ALLERGIES – WINNING THE BATTLE

Here are some ideas from the [Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America](#) on ways to manage and reduce allergy symptoms.

- Start taking allergy medicines before your allergy season begins.
 - Check pollen counts at [American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology](#) and [Pollen.com](#) so you can avoid outdoor activities on days when counts are high.
- Control pollen in your home so when you return indoors to reduce your exposure by:

- Keeping windows closed.
- Removing your shoes before entering your home.
- Not allowing pets on your bed or in your bedroom.
- Taking a shower, washing hair and changing clothes at night to remove pollen.
- Using allergy covers on your pillows and mattresses & replacing pillows annually.

You can also follow these tips to reduce your pollen exposure while you are outside:

- Avoid going outdoors during peak pollen times. Pollen is usually highest from 5 to 10 a.m. and at dusk. Pollen is also higher on warm, breezy days.
- Wear a hat to cover your hair.
- While in the car, set your air conditioner to the “recirculate air” setting.

You don't have to dread spring allergies. With the right treatment, you can keep your spring allergies under control and still enjoy the season.



DOCTOR'S NOTE

ALLERGENS – ARE THEY SEASONAL?

By Dr. Bartholomew

Seasonal allergies, also known as “Hay Fever”, are not always seasonal - have you ever wondered what type of dust blows out of the central heat every time it kicks on? - and definitely are not always just related to hay. I personally think that we as patients and physicians underestimate the impact of seasonal allergies on our daily performance. This impact can range from a constant post-nasal drip causing a nagging sore throat to seasonal allergies that can flare a child's asthma...a serious complication.

One of the most common questions that I get is...should I go and get allergy tested for my seasonal allergies? Allergy testing, in my experience, is really only helpful if the patient is going to consider immunotherapy shots.

Otherwise, with multiple pollens and allergens blowing around in the Wyoming wind, it is very difficult to just “avoid” pollens and allergens. With this in mind, it is important for allergy sufferers to find and follow an effective allergy treatment plan. For more ideas on the ladder of therapeutic treatment options, read the accompanying article. Once you have established an effective plan ... Get out there and mow that yard...plant those flowers...but take your allergy medicine before you hit the hay!

Radio Spot - For more thoughts about allergies and allergy season, listen **HERE** to this interview with KPOW's Russ Graham recorded on May 09.

BETTER ACCESS = BETTER CARE.

PRACTICE NEWS



CHANDLER AND LOWERY CELEBRATE GRADUATIONS

The 307Health staff families of Austin Chandler and Dylan Lowery celebrated the completion of their students' twelve years of K-12 schooling with high school graduation on May 19. We are proud of these families and their young people and look forward to watching how they continue to grow into their adult lives and professions. Please join us in congratulating them.

TRACY ATTENDS ACP LEGISLATIVE DAY IN WASHINGTON, DC

Dr. Tracy attended Leadership Day activities for the American College of Physicians on May 14-15, 2019. The American College of Physicians is the largest medical-specialty society in the world with over 154,000 members worldwide. Topics discussed in detail with federal legislators included rising health insurance costs, rising prescription drug costs, the opioid epidemic, and residency training concerns for new physicians.

While in Washington, Dr. Tracy also met with our federal legislative teams from Wyoming on Monday, May 13th, to discuss issues related to direct primary care. Senator John Barrasso's office has expressed interest in exploring a pilot study with the Department of Veterans' Affairs in which the VA would pay for direct primary care membership. If you are a veteran and are interested in more information about this, call our office and we can put you in touch with Senator Barrasso's office.

On another positive note, there is also continued interest among our Wyoming offices to clarify the issues surrounding the use of health savings accounts to pay for direct primary care membership fees.



MEMBER SERVICES FOCUS

NO NEWS IS NOT GOOD NEWS – HELP US “CLOSE THE LOOP”

No news is not good news, it just means you don't know the news. “Closing the loop” is a buzz phrase in the medical world that is extremely important. For example, if a doctor orders a test and the patient has the test done, the loop is only closed when the doctor knows the results and communicates those results to the patient. This includes not just reporting of the results, but also answering any questions the patient might have regarding the test result and future direction.

If you do not hear a test result after having a blood draw, a radiology study, a biopsy, or any other test, please help us to “close the loop” by following up with us. For example, if you have a blood draw at a local hospital, you should expect to hear the results within 24 hours of having the test done. If you do not hear back from your doctor within this time frame, please call or text him or her so you know the results.

Medicine is a complicated field. There are many ways information flows to the office-phone calls, faxes, texts, emails and snail mail-and it's important that you know the information related to your health. Thank you for helping us close the loop!

NO VOUCHER NEEDED FOR SPORTS PHYSICALS

Sports physicals for 307Health members are free-of-charge. This doctor visit is required annually by the local school district for student athletes of all ages. Sports physical appointments can be made anytime after May 1. Schedule your student(s) appointment soon for a stress-free start to the Fall sports season.

HOLIDAY AND SUMMER FRIDAYS

The next scheduled holiday office closure will be Thursday, July 4. We will be open on Friday, July 5, as usual. 307Health will be open on Fridays through the summer with a lighter staffing schedule in the afternoons. Happy Summer!

A NEW ALLERGY TREATMENT OPTION

SUBLINGUAL IMMUNOTHERAPY

Sublingual (oral) immunotherapy is a process by which a patient is introduced to very small amounts of the substance to which they are allergic - the allergen. The tissue underneath the tongue has a high concentration of dendritic cells. These cells take the allergens into the body and present them to the immune system. The idea of immunotherapy, be it by the more traditional route of subcutaneous injection or by this sublingual route, is that the body is exposed to very small amounts of the allergen and then - over time - the allergen amount is increased until the body no longer mounts an allergic reaction when exposed to the allergen out in nature.

Sublingual immunotherapy appears to be a developing treatment option in America (used frequently in Europe) largely due to the inconvenience of subcutaneous allergy shots that require a patient to present to their doctor's office multiple times a month for an injection.

MESSAGING YOUR DOCTOR

Here are a couple of important tips when sending information to your doctor by text or email:

Tip 1 - If you're using a number that may be listed in more than one chart (spouse or children), please identify who is the **subject** of the text. We don't want to make any assumptions, so using the name would be helpful in the initial text.

Tip 2 - If you send an **email** to us from your phone, please confirm you sent it as an **email**. If you send an email message to us as a text from your cell phone, it doesn't get routed properly.

We want to do the right thing for the right person, so please help us with electronic communication.

Thank You!