



Creating Solutions, Changing Lives!



Healthy Lifestyles!

Easter Seals New Jersey
Healthy Lifestyles
May/June 2013

Asthma & Allergy, Better Sleep, Healthy Vision, & Lyme Disease Prevention

Dates to Remember:

- **June**
National Safety Month
- **Tues 8/7**
Service Club Day at Camp Merry Heart

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Spring showers bring beautiful flowers... and pollen, and hay fever...

Allergies and asthma often occur together. The same substances that trigger hay fever symptoms may also cause asthma symptoms.

An allergic response occurs when immune system proteins (antibodies) mistakenly identify a harmless substance, such as tree pollen, as an invader of the body.

To protect your body from this invader (substance) your antibodies bind to the allergen (the substance that causes an allergic reaction). The chemicals released by your immune system cause allergy symptoms which include **nasal congestion, runny nose, itchy eyes or skin reactions.**

Sometimes an allergic reaction can affect the lungs and airways leading to asthma symptoms such as repeated episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and nighttime or early morning coughing.

According to the National Institute of Health, **asthma currently affects about 25 million people in the United States**, including seven million children. More than half of people with asthma experience at least one asthma attack (a worsening of asthma symptoms) each year.

Physicians diagnose asthma based on medical history, a physical exam, results from lung function tests, and other measures. It can be controlled by taking medicine and avoiding environmental triggers that can cause an attack.

Substances that often cause reactions are:

Pollen • Dust Mites • Mold Spores • Food • Pet Dander Insect Stings • Medicines

The most important step you can take is to recognize and avoid the allergic substances that trigger your symptoms. Work with your medical provider to help you:

- Identify signs of an asthma attack
- Track and treat asthma symptoms
- Record peak flow readings to test lung function
- Treat symptoms and adjust medications
- Know when to seek emergency care
- Avoid asthma triggers

For more information about asthma & allergies, visit www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/allergy.html.

Take preventive measures and be aware of the signs and symptoms of Lyme disease!



Lyme disease is an illness caused by infection with the bacteria carried and spread by ticks. In NJ, the most commonly infected tick is the deer tick.

The NJ Department of Health offers the following information for identifying the most symptoms:

- A rash resembling a bull's-eye (appears 7-14 days after bite; occurs in 60-80% of people who become infected)
- Tiredness
- Fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Muscle aches
- Joint pain

If untreated, weeks to months later some people may also experience arthritis, nervous system problems, and heart problems.

You can reduce your risk by avoiding wooded areas, keeping lawns mowed and trees trimmed, wearing solid light-colored clothing with pants tucked into socks, and using insect repellents.

Check yourself for ticks frequently, especially before bed. Ticks tend to favor the scalp, behind the ears, underarms, ankles, and groin.

If you find a tick, remove it immediately before it attaches to the skin. Do not squeeze or crush it with bare hands. If it has already attached to the skin, use tweezers to grasp it by the head as close to the skin as possible. Pull steadily until the tick pulls out (expect resistance). Never squeeze, burn, or cover an attached tick with Vaseline or any other substance as it could force fluid from the tick into your skin. After removing the tick, disinfect the bite area and tweezers with alcohol and wash your hands with soap and hot water. Place the removed tick in a sealed container or small plastic bag. Contact your county's Health Department first to see if the tick should be brought in for testing; if not, place in the trash; do not flush as ticks can easily survive in the water.

For more details and additional information about tick bites and Lyme Disease contact your local health department, the NJ Department of Health at (www.nj.gov/health), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/lyme)

Now



Here!

Your eyes are an important part of your health.

The National Eye Institute recommends a comprehensive dilated eye exam to make sure you are keeping

your eyes healthy and seeing your best.

When it comes to common vision problems, some people don't realize they could see better with glasses or contact lenses. In addition, many common eye diseases such as diabetic eye disease (glaucoma, cataract, and diabetic retinopathy) and age-related macular degeneration often have no warning signs. A dilated eye exam is the only way to detect these diseases in their early stages.

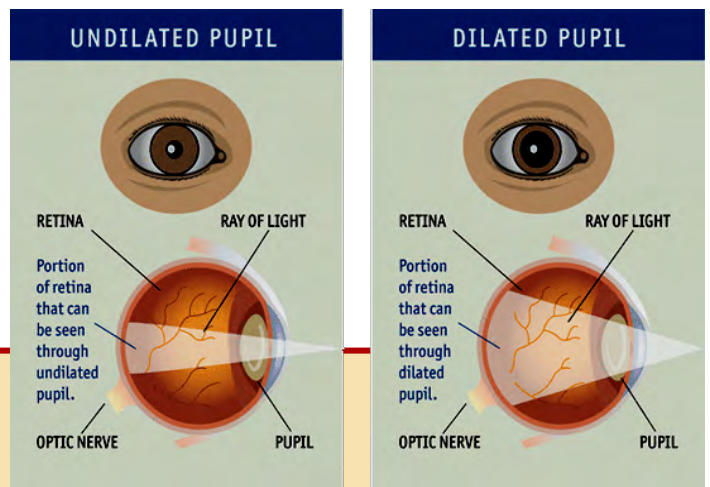
During a comprehensive dilated eye exam, your eye care professional places drops in your eyes to dilate, or widen, the pupil to allow more light to enter the eye the same way an open door lets more light into a dark room. This procedure enables your eye care professional to get a good look at the back of the eyes and examine them for any signs of damage or disease. Your eye care professional is the only one who can determine if your eyes are healthy and if you are seeing your best.

Tips for Finding an Eye Care Professional:

- Ask friends and family members to refer an eye care professional.
- Ask your family doctor to recommend an eye care specialist.
- Contact the department of ophthalmology or optometry at a local hospital or university medical center.
- Contact a state or county association of ophthalmologists or optometrists. These groups, usually called academies or societies, may have lists of eye care professionals with specific information on specialty and experience. Contact your insurance company or health plan to learn whether it has a list of eye care professionals that are covered under your plan.

For information about financial assistance for eyecare visit www.nei.nih.gov/healthyeyes/financialaid.asp

The National Eye Institute (NEI) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and is the Federal government's lead agency for vision research that leads to sight-saving treatments and plays a key role in reducing visual impairment and blindness.



Good Night, Sleep Tight!

Hectic schedules and never ending to-do lists can make it seem like there aren't enough hours in a day! Staying up an extra hour may get that extra chore out of the way but it could cheat you out of some valuable zzz's and leave you unmotivated and irritable in the morning.

Proper rest and sleep are just as important to good health as proper nutrition and physical activity. Sleep is associated with healing and restoring; this is especially important when recovering from illness. Our sleep cycles affect how we feel and behave. Without adequate sleep the ability to concentrate and participate in daily activities is decreased, and fatigue and irritability are increased.

Some tips for a good night's sleep:

- Create a **sleep-wake schedule** by going to bed and getting up at the same time every day – even on the weekends. This will help keep your biological clock in sync.
- Develop a **sleep ritual** by doing the same things each night just before bed. A quiet routine is a cue to the body to settle down for the night.
- Make your sleep **environment comfy and cozy**. A restful environment promotes a restful sleep.
- Did you know that **exercise** can help you sleep sounder and longer and feel more awake during the day? It's true. But the key is found in the *type* of exercise you choose and the *time* you participate in it during the day.

If you have difficulty falling asleep or you're sleeping as much as you need but you feel sleepy during the day, consult your doctor to determine if there is a medical condition interfering with your sleep.

- Laura O'Reilly, R.N. AVP Health & Wellness, Easter Seals New Jersey



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See how Easter Seals New Jersey is taking steps to address chronic health issues for people with disabilities at eastersealsnj.org/health

CELEBRATING 65 YEARS



NEW JERSEY

WALK WITH ME
& 5K RUN

Thank you to the 1,200 walkers & runners who participated in our 4th Annual Walk With Me & 5K Run at MetLife Stadium on May 11th! Check out the event photo albums at eastersealsnj.org!