

# Asthma & Allergy Center

Courteous Competent Care with Compassion

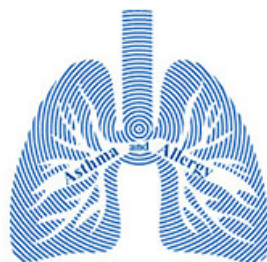
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Volume I; Edition 3

## Asthma & Allergy News

Fall of 2012 Newsletter



### Asthma & Allergy Center

Charleston  
Parkersburg  
Beckley  
Ripley  
Logan

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Greetings!

The mornings are crisper, the nights cooler, and the trees are unfurling their best colors - it's finally fall! After the brutal heat of the past summer, it's a relief to enjoy the outdoors again, throwing open the windows and shutting off the A/C.

While the season is undeniably beautiful, it also heralds the allergy season. That's because it's Ragweed time!. Although the tree pollen has been gone since May, and the grass pollen has tapered off, Ragweed and the gang (Pigweed, Lamb's Quarter, Cocklebur, Sorrel, Goldenrod etc.) are just getting ready. And then there are the respiratory infections, especially for the kids on return to school, to share and exchange the viruses they acquired during their summer travels. People with Asthma and Allergies don't catch any more URIs than others, they just suffer more from each one they catch. because they have Hyperreactive upper and/or Lower Airways.

Visit the patient education page of  
[www.asthmaweb.com](http://www.asthmaweb.com)  
to learn more about  
asthma and allergies, or

[Patient Education](#)

[Forms and Documents](#)

[Career Opportunities](#)

[Contact Us](#)

### Providers

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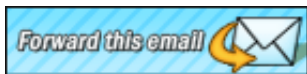
Tammy Richmond PA -C

Brenda Walker NP

#### To Make An Appointment:

Please call us at **304-343-4300** during normal hours, or leave us a [message here](#).

To Refer a patient please call as above or FAX this [Patient Referral Form](#). **304-343-5473**



#### We Want to Hear From You!

Help us serve you and your patients better.

Please send us your comments, suggestions

call 304-343-4300 to speak with a member of our medical staff.

## Ragweed Allergies

Ragweed, the number one cause of pollen allergy in West Virginia, produces pollen from mid August to the first deep frost. Once the pollen production has begun, ragweed season does not stop until about Thanksgiving. The pollen is so lightweight that the wind can carry it for hundreds of miles.





and questions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Our Email address:  
asthmaweb@msn.com

### *Did you know?*

The older a tree gets, the more pollen it produces.

*"A cold may be accompanied by fever, and will usually clear up in less than a week; whereas with an allergy the sufferer continues to have symptoms, but no fever, for as long as there is exposure to an allergen.*

Allergies are the 5th leading cause of chronic disease in USA.

*Asthma accounts for 2 million ER visits and 500,000 hospital admissions a year in the US.*

## Common Ragweed Plant

The major allergen in ragweed is called AgE. In addition, some people may become allergic to Ra3. AgE is a very potent allergen. Majority of people who are allergic to some type of pollen are also allergic to ragweed. It is estimated that every fall more than one million tons of ragweed pollen is released in the air in North America. Combined with the fact that it goes on over almost four months, it is responsible for a lot of human misery.



Ragweed Pollen

There is no cure for ragweed allergy. Complete avoidance of exposure is impossible, but you can reduce exposure by staying indoors in filtered air on warm, breezy, sunny fall days. But then, would life be worth living? Antihistamines and steroid nose sprays provide symptom relief but have no effect on the underlying allergic sensitivity. For patients who do not get enough relief with symptom suppression alone, there is the Immunotherapy or Allergy Injections that decrease the allergic sensitivity and 'teach' the immune system to tolerate the antigens without causing local inflammation. They provide more effective, long term and somewhat permanent relief and are about as close to cure for allergies as is possible given current state of the art.

Penicillin is a common cause of drug allergy. Anaphylactic reactions to penicillin cause 400 deaths a year in the US.

*The longest sneezing spree: 978 days.*

Asthma affects 1 in every 15 children in America

*Allergies are caused by an immune system that treats a harmless substance, such as pollen, as an invader.*

Besides ragweed allergy, injections also work for grass and tree pollens, cat and dog allergies, mold and dust mite allergies, many of which often coexist with ragweed allergy.

[More Information on Ragweed](#)

[More Information on Allergy Injections](#)

## Asthma and Allergy Center Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

*"Through their dedication to progressive Patient Care, Education, and Treatment, the Staff of the Asthma and Allergy Center exemplifies the qualities that make up the criteria for the Lifetime Achievement Award. . . . ."*

Citation for Lifetime Achievement Award from The West Virginia Asthma Coalition.

[West Virginia Asthma Coalition](#) is a partnership between the [WV Asthma Education and Prevention Program](#) of the State of West Virginia, Dept. of Health and Human Resources, established by a grant from the Center for Disease Control (CDC); and the [American Lung Association in WV](#). It is the largest such coalition in West Virginia. Its membership includes physicians, nurses, pharmacists, respiratory therapists, health educators, data and outreach specialists, and others whose lives are impacted by Asthma.

Each year, before its annual conference, members of the Coalition are asked to nominate an individual or group that shows long-term, supreme dedication to improving the lives of West Virginians with Asthma. This year, the members chose to honor the Asthma and Allergy Center by presenting them with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Cynthia Keely-Wilson, Manager, WV Asthma Education and Prevention Program presented the award.

*"It gives me great pride to be here today, with the leaders in Asthma Education and Prevention in WV. It is an honor that I have been given an opportunity to present this year's Lifetime Achievement Award.*

*This year's award recipient has helped address the needs of West Virginians with Asthma for over 30 years. The dedication to improving patients' quality of life is, like the Visa commercial says, Priceless.*

*It gives me great pleasure to announce the Winner of the 2012 Lifetime achievement award: **The Asthma and Allergy Center!***

*Through their dedication to progressive Patient Care, Education, and Treatment, the Staff of the Asthma and Allergy Center exemplifies the qualities that make up the criteria for the Lifetime Achievement Award.*

*Dr. Kumar, please accept this **award from the WVAC in tremendous gratitude for the work that you all do every day to improve the lives of those with Asthma.***

Asthma & Allergy Center humbly but proudly accepts the award and pledges to continue to help improve the quality of life of our patients with Asthma and Allergies by providing medical 'Care with Courtesy, Competence and Compassion'.

## LABA-ICS Safety in Asthma

For the past 2 decades, a combined regimen of inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) and long-acting beta-agonists (LABAs) has been considered first-line therapy for asthma that is uncontrolled on ICS monotherapy.

The combination reduces symptoms and exacerbations and improves lung function and quality of life. However, in an earlier large safety trial, LABAs used without concomitant use of ICS were associated with asthma-related deaths; an unresolved issue is whether this association is mitigated when LABAs are used with ICS. Almost all Asthma experts are convinced that the increased mortality was due to the absence of concurrent controller medication, i.e. ICS in this case. LABA without ICS is NOT (should not be) used for Asthma in the United States. The FDA has requested five large clinical trials to evaluate ICS-LABA combination products with the primary outcome of life-threatening asthma exacerbation or death. The results will not be available until 2017, but editorialists caution

against withholding ICS-LABA products in suitable patients.

In this population-based, observational study from Michigan, 1828 asthma patients (age range, 12-56) who received either ICS alone or an ICS-LABA combination were followed for a mean of 2.1 years; the primary endpoint was severe exacerbations (i.e., need for oral steroids, asthma-related emergency department visit, or asthma-related hospitalization).

Pharmacy data was used to estimate ICS and LABA exposure. Combined therapy had a better protective effect on exacerbations compared with ICS monotherapy. The study was not large enough to analyze intubations and death outcomes.

We should continue to hear more on this subject over the next few years.

[More Information](#)

## Voice Guided Epi Pen Approved by the FDA

A new voice-guided Epinephrine auto-injector (Auvi-Q, Sanofi US) has been approved for use by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

According to the manufacturer, this is the first auto-injector device with both audio and visual cues to guide patients through the injection process. The product is expected to be commercially available later this year.

Epi auto-injectors are indicated for emergency treatment of life-threatening allergic reactions to insect stings (Honeybee, Yellow Jacket, Wasp and Hornets), foods (most commonly Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Fish, Shellfish, Eggs, Milk), Latex and other less common allergens.

About the size of a credit card and the thickness of a cellphone Auvi-Q gives loud and clear directions for its use when opened. It has a retractable needle mechanism to prevent accidental needle sticks after injection.

It is surprising how many patients who have Epi autoinjectors never learn (or are never taught) how to use the device, and even those who learn, worry, rightly so, that others around them will not know how to use it during an emergency. The device may be a useful addition to the three choices available in the US consumers (Epi-Pen, Twinject and Adrenaclick).

[More Information](#)

## WHO Recommends Three Viruses for 2012 Flu Vaccine

Did you get your Flu Shot yet?

For 2012, the WHO recommended that the Northern Hemisphere's 2012-2013 seasonal influenza vaccine be made from the following three vaccine viruses:

- an A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Victoria/361/2011 (H3N2)-like virus;
- a B/Wisconsin/1/2010-like virus (from the B/Yamagata lineage of viruses).

Flu vaccine viruses are chosen to maximize the likelihood that the influenza vaccine will protect against the viruses most likely to spread and cause illness among people during the upcoming flu season.

Each year, experts from Food and Drug Administration (FDA), World Health Organization (WHO), U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other institutions study virus samples collected from around the world. They identify the influenza viruses that are the most likely to cause illness during the upcoming flu season so that people can be protected against them through vaccination.

If you ever wondered why we need a flu shot every year, it is because the viral antigens used in the current shots are subject to genetic drift; and that little change in the virus protein makes the antibodies we made from last year's vaccine ineffective against this year's flu bug.

Well, with millions of lives to be saved and billions of dollars to be made, the drug companies have been trying their best to come up with a solution. Optimists say we are three to five years from getting such a vaccine! Click on the link below for the latest on the subject.

[More Information](#)

## Enjoy Halloween inspite of Asthma and Allergies

Halloween can be a scary time for kids with food allergies, allergic rhinitis and asthma. Triggers that lurk in candy, costumes, makeup and decorations may cause a reaction that spoils the spooky fun. American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (ACAAI) suggests the following tips to keep the little goblins with allergic conditions safe this Halloween.

1. Keep an eye on "fun size" treats - Even if the full-sized version of a treat is allergen-free, don't assume the "fun-size" is safe, too.
2. Masks and costumes may contain latex and other common allergens so be sure to read their labels. Makeup, hair dyes and decorations can include ingredients that: trigger asthma; Use hypoallergenic makeup or steer clear of makeup altogether.
3. If your goblin has asthma or a life-threatening allergy, carry emergency medicines such as quick-relief inhalers or injectable epinephrine in case of a severe reaction. Children with severe allergies or severe asthma also should wear medical alert identification bracelets or chains stating their diagnosis.
4. Masks can interfere with breathing, so children with asthma should wear a half mask or no mask at all. Also keep in mind that cold weather, running from house to house for candy, and exposure to allergens such as mold spores hiding in piles of leaves, can cause asthma symptoms to flare up.
5. Feed your monsters before they go trick or treating so they are less tempted to snack on potentially



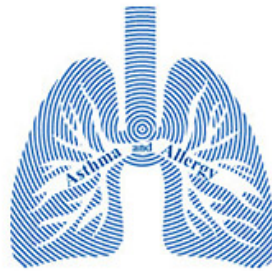
problematic candy. When you're back home, trade allergen-free candy you've purchased for the candy they've collected. Or have allergic kids do a candy swap with their non-allergic friends.

6. Consider skipping trick or treating altogether and invite your child's friends for a party, where you can control the food and offer fun activities such as bobbing for apples. Set up trick or treat stations around the house, each of which offers a different allergen-free treat.

[More Information](#)

All of us at the **Asthma and Allergy Center** wish you a Happy, Healthy Autumn of 2012.

**Sincerely,**



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