

# Patient Update

## On vacation with allergies and asthma

During the summer, millions of Americans seek fun and relaxation away from the stress of their everyday lives. However, allergy and asthma sufferers cannot escape dealing with their allergic condition. So, to ensure your vacation is enjoyable, the AAAAI suggests planning for changes in your environment.

### Plan ahead

If you suffer from allergies and asthma, make sure you are prepared for your trip, and have taken the proper steps to ensure a safe journey:

- If you have active allergy symptoms or unstable asthma, have a pre-trip physical.
- Pack all medications you will need on your trip in your purse, briefcase or carry-on luggage, so you don't lose them if your luggage is delayed. Make sure you bring more than enough.
- If you cross several time zones, allow for time differences so that medication dosage schedules will remain constant.
- Before traveling abroad, obtain the name of an AAAAI allergist/immunologist practicing in your destination area. The AAAAI offers a Physician Referral and Information line, (800) 822-2762, or Physician Referral System on the Web site, [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org).
- Obtain travel medical insurance.

### Traveling by car

Common allergens such as mites and molds can lurk in the carpeting, upholstery and ventilation systems of vehicles. Before beginning a lengthy auto trip do the following:

- Air out your car 10 minutes before you start your trip to get rid of allergens that might be inside.
- During your ride, keep the windows closed and turn on the air conditioning.
- Ask fellow travelers not to smoke.
- Travel in the early morning or late evening, when the air quality is better.
- If you use a nebulizer for your asthma, get a portable nebulizer that plugs into your car's cigarette lighter or uses a portable battery pack.

### Traveling by plane

Air quality on planes can greatly affect the allergic or asthmatic patient. The following tips will help make your plane ride more enjoyable:

- If you have severe asthma and think you may need supplemental oxygen, you must arrange for this with the airline well before your flight. No one can be refused travel for needing supplemental oxygen, however, you must plan in advance.
- If you have food allergies, be cautious of what you are eating. Most airplane food is supplied by outside vendors, and flight attendants might not know what specific ingredients are in each item.
- Make sure to carry an EpiPen in case you have a severe reaction while in flight and make airline staff aware of your medication prior to check in.
- While in flight, chew gum, sip liquids and swallow often to relieve sinus pressure.
- The air in planes is very dry, use saline nasal spray.

### Sleeping accommodations

Hotel rooms often contain dust mites and molds in carpeting, mattresses and upholstered furniture that can worsen your allergy and asthma symptoms. Before checking in for the night, consider requesting the following:

- Ask if there are allergy-proof rooms available.
- Request a sunny, dry room away from areas near indoor pools.
- Inquire about the hotel's pet policy, and request a room that has been pet-free.
- If allergic to dust mites, bring your own dust-proof, zippered covers for pillows and mattresses, or personal bedding.

To find an allergist/immunologist in your area or the area where you will be vacationing, call the AAAAI Physician Referral and Information Line at (800) 822-2762 or visit the AAAAI Web site at [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org).

For updated pollen counts in your vacation destination, visit the National Allergy Bureau Web site, [www.aaaai.org/nab/](http://www.aaaai.org/nab/).

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