

Patient Update

College survival tips for allergies and asthma

Going to college can be a fun and exciting time, however, for asthma and allergy sufferers it should also be a time for preparation. Nearly 40-50 million people in the United States have allergies and 20.3 million people are affected by asthma.

College does not mean that asthma and allergy sufferers can leave behind the responsibilities of taking care of their asthma and allergies.

By continuing to take their medication and following their treatment plan, allergic and asthmatic students can take control of their condition and enjoy their college experience.

The AAAAI recommends allergy and asthma sufferers take the following steps to prepare for college:

Asthma

- Make an appointment with your allergist/immunologist before leaving for college
- Refill your prescriptions and have your doctor find a local allergist/immunologist for you to see while at college
- Complete an asthma action plan and provide a copy for your roommate, resident assistant and hall director
- Request a smoke-free room and roommate – smoke is a trigger for most people with asthma
- Try to avoid social situations where you will be exposed to smoke and other triggers

Allergies

- Keep dorm room clutter to a minimum. Try to limit upholstered furniture or secondhand rugs as these are filled with allergens
- Dorm life breeds mold, dust mites, bacteria and viruses. It is important to keep your room clean and free of these triggers, remember to vacuum and dust often
- Encase bedding with dust mite proof covers and wash sheets and blankets weekly in hot water, to keep your room free of dust mites and other airborne particles
- Keep track of high pollen and mold counts in your area that may affect your allergies. Check out the National Allergy Bureau's Web site for more information, www.aaaai.org/nab
- Arrange to continue receiving allergy shots, if

needed, with a local allergist/immunologist

- Take medications as prescribed by your physician and store them in a safe place

Food allergy

- Let your roommate and resident assistant know what foods you are allergic to and what an allergic reaction looks like
- Ask your roommate not to eat foods that you are allergic to in your room
- Speak with the student health center about food allergies and anaphylaxis, also identify where the closest hospital is in case of emergencies
- Teach your roommate how to use an Epi-pen® and carry it with you at all times
- Be cautious when eating in the cafeteria and other restaurant-type settings, foods are easily cross-contaminated
- Speak with the cafeteria manager to see if there are meals specifically for students with food allergies

See your allergist/immunologist

With all the preparations involved for heading off to college this fall, don't forget to see your allergist/immunologist. An allergist/immunologist will help you enjoy your college years by providing you with an effective management plan for your allergies and asthma.



To learn more about asthma and allergies, call the AAAAI Physician Referral and Information Line at (800) 822-2762 or visit the AAAAI Web site at www.aaaai.org.

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