

HEALTH ALERT!

Are You Ready For Spring “Asthma Season”?

(NAPSA)—Blooming flowers, budding trees and greener grass signal the long-awaited transition from winter to spring. For many, these are commonly welcome signs that warmer weather is just around the corner. However, for millions of Americans across the country, these changes mark the beginning of allergy season. And for a significant number, these changes also signal the start of asthma season.

Asthma is a chronic disease that affects more than 17 million Americans. According to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, 10 million individuals suffer from allergic asthma, a type of asthma that is associated with allergies and triggered by allergens. There are several allergens that trigger allergic asthma, including dust mites, pollens, molds, animal dander, grass and weeds. Research has revealed that for people with allergic asthma, these allergens play a significant role in causing the airway inflammation that leads to asthma symptoms.

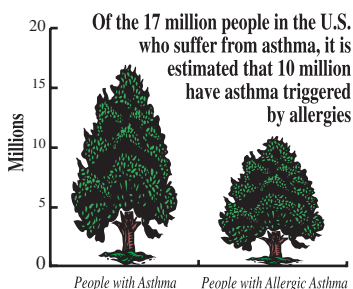
“Expenses related to allergic asthma, from missed school days to physician and emergency room visits, add up to \$6.2 billion a year,” said Gail Shapiro, MD, FAAAAI, president of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI). “It is important for people who suffer from allergic asthma to work with an asthma specialist to find the best treatment options to control their symptoms and limit their exposure to triggers.”

Approximately 60 percent of people with asthma have allergic asthma, causing common asthma symptoms, including inflammation of the airways, wheezing and shortness of breath, chest tightness, persistent coughing and recurring or lingering colds. While these symptoms may appear year-round, changes in the environment during the spring and fall will cause allergic asthma symptoms to peak more dramatically during these seasons.

“There are a number of established and emerging treatments for

Could Allergies Be Triggering Your Asthma?

Allergic rhinitis, or “hay fever,” is considered a major risk factor in developing allergic asthma. Symptoms can be triggered by allergens, such as airborne pollens and molds, animal dander, grass and weeds.



Source: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI)



allergic asthma which have proved highly effective and there is no reason for people who have allergies or asthma to suffer with the symptoms,” said Jonathan Corren, MD, of the Allergy Research Foundation. “Physicians trained in allergy and asthma care can develop treatment plans that will alleviate and control their symptoms.”

Current asthma therapies include oral and inhaled corticosteroids, long—and short-acting beta agonists, and leukotriene modifiers. These therapies decrease ongoing inflammation and reduce bronchial constriction in asthma. Allergen immunotherapy (or allergy shots) reduces the reaction people have to allergy triggers.

A new drug currently under review by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), known as anti-IgE, revolves around the theory that an imbalance in the immune system may contribute to the development of allergic disease. Anti-IgE therapy stops the allergic reaction before it starts, allowing the patient to avoid allergy symptoms, which also often trigger an asthma attack or lead to the development of asthma.

For more information or to find an allergist/immunologist in your area, contact the AAAAI patient information and physician referral line at 1-800-822-2762, or visit their Web site, www.aaaai.org.