

hapitimes



ALLERGY UPDATE

Make the Most of Your Visit to an Allergist

Each year, more than 12 million doctor's visits result from allergic rhinitis, commonly known as allergies. Symptoms from seasonal allergies are among the primary reasons people miss school or work.

If allergies are driving you crazy this spring and over-the-counter (OTC) medications aren't providing enough relief, you may be considering seeing an allergist. If you do, be sure to write down questions, concerns and symptoms in advance. Here's a handy checklist:

- Do you have new symptoms? Are your symptoms worsening? Be sure to mention coughing, difficulty breathing or loss of sleep, as these may be signs of asthma.

- Have you missed school or work due to allergy or asthma symptoms? Have you had to visit an emergency room or be hospitalized due to symptoms?
- What medications, if any, are you taking? This includes prescription and OTC medications as well as herbal supplements.
- You may want to ask: What steps can I take to avoid allergens? Am I currently on the best treatment plan? What other treatment options are available?

— *Source: American Academy of Allergies, Asthma & Immunology*

"Mommy, My Ear Hurts!" Ear Infections Are the Most Common Cause for Kids' Doctor Visits

An ear infection is an inflammation of the middle ear, usually caused by bacteria, that occurs when fluid builds up behind the eardrum. Anyone can get an ear infection, but children get them more often than adults. Three out of four children will have at least one ear infection by their third birthday. In fact, ear infections are the most common reason parents bring their child to a doctor. The scientific name for an ear infection is otitis media (OM).

If your child isn't old enough to say "my ear hurts," here are a few things to look for: Tugging or pulling at the ear(s), fussiness and crying, trouble sleeping, fever, fluid

draining from the ear, balance problems, or trouble hearing. Most ear infections are viral and will get better on their own. Your doctor can determine if treatment is needed. Ear pain can be treated with over-the-counter pain relievers or with a warm, dry compress on the ear.

— *Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

Healthy Home Tips

The EPA website has a great interactive tool for kids (and parents!) on the common chemicals found in the home, with tips for how to stay safe and healthy. Click around from room to room to find information. A few tips:



- Always read labels on cleaners and polishes, as many contain chemicals linked to cancer and can be deadly if accidentally ingested.
- Do not mix cleaners, especially ones with chlorine and ammonia, which create chemical fumes that can be fatal.
- Open windows when cleaning inside the house.
- Air-fresheners contain chemicals that can be irritants. A safer alternative: baking soda, which can absorb odors in the refrigerator and the home.
- Consider vinegar as a cleaner—it is safe enough to eat and is effective in the kitchen and bathroom.

More online: www.epa.gov/kidshometour/index.htm

hapi meals

healthy, fast & easy recipes

Tomato Salsa

Instead of opening up a jar of salsa, make a batch with fresh tomatoes, onions, and peppers. It's an easy enough recipe to make with small children—and you can make enough to use through the week. Bonus: if you have a garden, you can grow your own tomatoes for it.

INGREDIENTS:

Tomatoes, chopped (add color by using yellow and red tomatoes)
½ white onion, chopped
2 tablespoons canned, diced mild chiles or 1 small jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
¼ cup chopped cilantro,
juice of 1 lime
Optional: add ½ teaspoon of chili powder and black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS:

In a medium bowl, mix all ingredients.

From the Kids in the Kitchen <http://www.nutrition.gov/life-stages/children/kids-kitchen>



Celebrating Earth Month

We have suggestions for ways to celebrate Earth Month—and Earth Day on April 22—that are good for you and the planet. It's easy to go green....

Eat your greens.

Add green leafy vegetables to meals or dishes for good-for-you fiber, vitamins, minerals, and calcium.

Plant your own vegetables.

Spring is the perfect time to plant herbs and vegetables. It's also a great way to teach kids where their food comes from and encourage them to cook with what they grown (see recipe at left).

Add more plants to your home.

Buy a houseplant (or two, or three). Plants can help detoxify the air and can help people with allergies.

Master leftovers.

Challenge yourself to make use of your leftovers. Find ways to prevent food waste by being creative: making chicken soup with leftover chicken, and so on.

Think twice before putting out the trash.

Are you throwing something away that can be repaired or repurposed? Or recycled? Or donated for someone else to use?

Visit a local park.

If you don't already, make it a point to visit your local park. Studies show that spending time in the great outdoors can lower stress and lift your spirits.

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