

ASTHMA & ALLERGY

BULLETIN

ASTHMA AND ALLERGY FOUNDATION OF AMERICA • NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

ALLERGY MANAGEMENT

Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management in Massachusetts Schools

by Michael Pistiner, MD, MMSc

This article originally published on AllergyHome.org. Adapted by Michael Pistiner for use by AAFA New England.



School Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management

Effective food allergy management is needed at all times and all circumstances. Prevention and emergency preparedness are the pillars of food allergy management. Small amounts of a food that someone is allergic to can cause anaphylaxis (a severe, life threatening, allergic reaction). To prevent exposure to food allergens anyone responsible for

the care of a child with a food allergy must effectively read labels, prevent cross contact, use efficient cleaning, and communicate clearly. They must also be prepared for allergic emergencies. Anyone responsible for a child with food allergies must be able to recognize a severe allergic reaction, have epinephrine (treatment of choice for anaphylaxis) available, know when and how to use it, and know to immediately contact

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RESEARCH UPDATE

Landmark Study: Environmental Impact on Asthma

by Lisa Bartnikas, MD

Children spend a majority of their time in schools, yet little is known about how school environmental allergen exposure affects asthma symptoms. In a recent study, researchers attempted to understand how environmental allergens found in schools affected children's asthma.

Asthma is a common, chronic

disease of the lungs, affecting more than 7.0 million children in the US and resulting in more than 14 million missed school days per year. It is characterized by repeated episodes of wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and nighttime coughing. Although there is no cure for asthma, one way that symptoms can be controlled is by avoiding potential triggers. Environmental allergens commonly found indoors include

cockroach, cat, dog, dust mite, mouse and rat. Mouse, rat and cockroach allergen is detected when there is an infestation by these pests. Cat and dog allergen is detected in homes of pet owners and in schools when people with pets at home bring the allergen into the schools on their clothing. Dust mites are microscopic bugs that are commonly found in upholstered furniture, carpets, bedding and

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A Message from our NEW Executive Director

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Dear Friends & Supporters,

I am pleased to be here at the New England Chapter of Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America serving those in New England that suffer from asthma and allergies. I am committed to helping people enjoy a "Life without Limits"!

2017 is a year of change and progress for AAFA New England – not only am I the new Executive Director, we have a new President of the Board of Directors, Jan Hanson, as well as, a new Treasurer, Lyndsay King. A Medical Advisory Board was recently created consisting of Dr. Jennifer LeBovidge, Dr. Lisa Bartnikas, Dr. Michael Pistiner and Dr. Susan Rudders. We look forward to working with them on new programming that will get information and support out to our membership all across New England.

AAFA NE has spent many years at the forefront of education, advocacy, support and awareness for those in the New England area with asthma and allergies and we will continue to move forward with that mission.

My education as a lawyer and my previous experience as a Capitol Hill staffer and lobbyist gives me a tremendous amount of strategic capabilities and coalition building expertise that will assist our community. I have spent several years in fundraising and relationship development which will help AAFA NE as we move into a new era of strategic partnerships and generating sustainable revenue sources.

I am extremely grateful to all of you for your support – without you we could not provide our services and programs. Our deepest gratitude goes to The Thoracic Foundation for their grant that makes this newsletter possible. In addition, thank you to our 2017 Corporate Partners – MSIC and Perfectly Free – we look forward to a productive year. We are looking forward creating partnerships and working with the entire New England community to advance our mission.

Thank you!

Karen Lynch Calton
Executive Director



emergency services. Prevention and preparedness are always needed and the school setting is no exception. Effective food allergy management needs sound policy and well trained and knowledgeable administration, school nurses, school staff, and school community.

School-wide Food Allergy Education is an Enormous and Important Responsibility

In the past, parents shouldered the responsibility to teach those responsible for the care of their child with food allergies. Families have also been expected to educate the other parents and their child's classmates. Having parents of individual students teach staff, as well as other parents and students, can be a huge responsibility and challenge. Social dynamics can sabotage even the best educational effort. Also, some families of children and children with food allergies may feel uncomfortable. Some children unfortunately have been singled out and the subject of teasing or bullying by others.

Educated Schools Help Keep Children With Food Allergies Safe and Happy

The school culture and attitudes of parents, teachers, and other children set the tones in our schools. Misperceptions and negative attitudes about food allergies can lead to teasing

and bullying. Educated and aware school communities can help create supportive and safe environments for students with food allergy. Awareness and understanding can help create communities of support and inclusion and prevent divisiveness. Policies and procedures must be implemented to not only manage a child's direct care but also include food allergy education and awareness for all staff, parents, students and others in the school community.

Staff Food Allergy Training

School staff food allergy and anaphylaxis education is not only necessary in creating communities of support but critically important from a practical and emergency perspective. Staff can extend the reach of a school nurse and all play a role in their "team" when it comes to preventing accidental exposure and dealing with allergic emergencies. They are also key players in food allergy management for individual students. In MA select staff are trained to administer epinephrine when the school nurse is unavailable. Current regulation though, do not allow for unlicensed staff to administer epinephrine to a student or staff member with allergies not known to the school. Staff education and understanding are key to establishing safe and supportive school communities.

Food Allergy in Massachusetts' Schools: MA Guidelines for the management of Food Allergies in School

MA has lead the country in food allergy management in US schools. It was first state in its to implement the use of food allergy guidelines and also the first to establish mandated reporting of epinephrine administrations in its schools. Here in MA we are blessed with many schools having full time school nurses and the MA DPH School Health Service Unit. Used together, since the guidelines creation, there has not been a food allergy related death in a MA school. The guidelines were updated in 2016 and continue to stand out as strong and practical guidance document that can be used as by schools to help create and implement sound policies. Managing Life Threatening Allergies in Schools, apply to public, private and charter schools as well as elementary, middle and high schools. The 2016 update not only includes an updated and refreshed version of the MA Guidelines but also, like the CDC Voluntary Guidelines(Federal Guidelines based on the original MA Guidelines), include targeted education of students and parents in addition to staff and administration. These guidelines serve as an excellent foundation for schools to implement school policies and efficiently take on the responsibility of school
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stuffed animals. People who are allergic to these things can experience symptoms including sneezing, runny nose, cough, and itchy, red or watery eyes. People with asthma who have these allergies can experience worsening of their asthma.

Previous studies have shown that asthma complications are higher in minorities and low-income groups in inner-city neighborhoods. Other studies have shown that exposure to particular environmental allergens in inner-city homes is associated with worse asthma outcomes, and interventions to reduce home exposure to these allergens improves asthma outcomes. This study is unique because it is the first to comprehensively evaluate asthma symptoms resulting from environmental allergen exposure in schools.

Allergen levels were measured in dust samples collected from classrooms from inner-city public elementary schools in the northeastern US. 351 students ages 4-13 years with asthma from 38 elementary schools were followed for 1 year during this 5-year study.

In this study, mouse allergen was the most prevalent allergen, detected in 99.5% of schools,

This study is unique because it is the first to comprehensively evaluate asthma symptoms resulting from environmental allergen exposure in schools.

followed by cat in 94.8%, dog in 82.6% and dust mite in 46.5%. Rat and cockroach were rarely found in schools. Levels of mouse allergen found in schools were significantly higher than levels found in students' homes.

The key finding in this study was that children with asthma exposed to higher levels of mouse allergen in schools had more days of asthma symptoms and worse lung function. Interestingly, this finding was true regardless of whether the children had mouse allergy. None of the other indoor allergens were associated with worse asthma outcomes. The authors acknowledged that their findings may not be generalizable to other cities, which may have allergens

found in different levels in their schools.

This fascinating study provides further insight into the effects of environmental allergen exposure on asthma in children. This study looked specifically at allergen exposure in the school setting, where large numbers of children spend the majority of their days, and demonstrated that the school environment is an important contributor to asthma symptoms in children. In the future, finding ways to decrease levels of mouse allergen in schools could have a large and positive impact on the many schoolchildren with asthma.

References:

1. Sheehan WJ, Permaul P, Petty CR, Coull BA, Baxi SN, Gaffin JM, Lai PS, Gold DR, Phipatanakul W. Association Between Allergen Exposure in Inner-City Schools and Asthma Morbidity Among Students. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2017;171(1):31-8. doi: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2016.2543. PubMed PMID: 27893060; PMCID: PMC5349325.
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/asthmaata.htm>

Lisa M. Bartnikas, MD is an Allergist/Immunologist at Boston Children's Hospital and Instructor in Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. She treats children in the Allergy/Immunology Clinic, as well as in the Food Allergy Program and Interstitial Lung Disease Program at Boston Children's Hospital. She has research interests in evaluation and management of food allergies.



ALLERGY MANAGEMENT (continued from page 3)

community education. Parents and schools no longer need to recreate the wheel to manage a student's food allergies.

Senate Bill 228, An Act to Establish Food Allergy Plans

Senate Bill 228: An Act to Establish Food Allergy Plans, was filed January 2017. It was proposed and drafted by Dr. Christine Olsen of FASI (Food Allergy Science Initiative) and Senator Cynthia Creem, with input by local experts in food allergy and school health. SB 228 is a solid piece of legislation that will help MA continue to lead our nation when it comes to managing students with life threatening allergies. SB 228 is currently under review and requires that all MA schools create a policy, that addresses prevention and emergency preparedness for managing food

allergies, in addition to requiring staff training to implement policies. SB228 also addresses availability of stock epinephrine and necessary training so that if a full time school nurse is not immediately available, even a first time anaphylactic reaction can be treated with epinephrine. If passed, these regulations will build on the already comprehensive MA guidelines by making policy, education, and stock epinephrine availability necessary instead of voluntary.

Michael Pistiner, MD, MMSc is a Boston based pediatric allergist and Director of Food Allergy Advocacy, Education and Prevention for MassGeneral Hospital for Children's, Food Allergy Center. He is a voluntary consultant for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health School Service Unit and the father of a child with food allergy. He serves as a medical adviser for the Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America, New England Chapter. Dr. Pistiner is the author of Everyday Cool with Food Allergies, a co-author of Living Confidently with Food Allergy, and co-founder and content creator of AllergyHome.org.

Please help support SB 228 by contacting your Massachusetts legislators and requesting that they co-sponsor the bill.

Please see Schools.AllergyHome.org for free Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Educational Material that is consistent with the MA and CDC Guidelines and designed to educate entire school communities.



Upcoming Events presented by AAFA New England

Presentation by Michael Pistiner, MD, MMSc on food allergy management in Massachusetts schools.

This event will be scheduled at Newton-Wellesley Hospital in early September. Details to follow on AAFA New England website.

Coming this fall to our website: New webinar feature where presentations can be viewed.

Kyle Dine Family Concerts - October dates and locations to be announced on our website.

Visit www.asthmaandallergies.org for more information.

The wonderfully entertaining Tufts Beelzebubs left the crowd with smiles on their faces and music in their hearts! A wonderful night was had by all as we supported the programs and services that help people with asthma and allergies live full and healthy lives.



Breath of Spring 2017
***Celebration
 through Song***
 with The Tufts University
 Beelzebubs – May 5



Photos by Carla Uzzell



The Tufts University Beelzebubs serenade Blair Stone, Miss Granite State, whose “Appetite for Awareness” platform directly benefits AAFA New England.



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IN HER OWN VOICE

Why I Have an “Appetite for Food Allergy Awareness”

By Blair Stone, Miss Granite State

The Miss Granite State crown stands for four things: scholarship, success, style and service. A huge part of what the Miss America Program is about is most definitely the service that the contestants provide to their community, in turn making their region a better and brighter place. It is extremely important that people who are not a part of the pageant community know how much service plays a role in the Miss America Program.

Some of my earliest memories are being so excited to see my daddy, the “alligator,” (his beloved nickname since I couldn’t say allergist), when he came home from a busy day at work. His laugh was contagious every time I called him an alligator and he always reminded me how important his work was and that he helped people every day. As I got older, I watched the allergy field expand through my father’s profession and heard more and more stories about people I did and did not know suffer from life-threatening food allergies.

When I decided to start competing in pageants, I knew I needed a platform that was,

not only close to my heart, but that was something relevant that people could relate to. Despite the fact that I have no allergies of my own, my interest in the field has been instilled in me since I was a little girl. My father is very passionate about his work and it has inspired me to develop



a platform based on helping people with life-threatening food allergies called, “Appetite for Awareness.”

Not only have I done a vast amount of research in order to find ways to help those that have food allergies, I have conducted fundraisers that help raise money and awareness of the AAFA New England Chapter. My most recent fundraiser took place at Not Your Average Joe’s in Nashua, New Hampshire. Not Your Average Joe’s let me set up a generous portion of their dining room with

AAFA New England signs and matching teal decorations and they kindly donated 15% of their proceeds that I helped generate that evening to the AAFA New England Chapter. It was a great feeling to know that an event I planned and hosted was able to help an organization that helps those that suffer from allergies and asthma in my community.

Until I pass on my title in January 2018, I hope to continue hosting events and keep spreading awareness about my platform to everyone I come in contact with. You will see me on August 6th at the “Nut Free” Red Sox game at Fenway Park at the AAFA New England table with my crown and sash for my next attempt at letting the public know about the importance of allergy awareness! To purchase tickets to this Red Sox game and get a chance to meet me, learn about allergies and enjoy a peanut free baseball game, email www.peanutallergy@redsox.com.



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Karen Lynch Calton
Executive Director

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The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, New England Chapter, is dedicated to helping people with asthma and allergic diseases, and those who care for them, through education, support for research and an array of services.

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Brookline Boy Birthday Gift - Donation for AAFA New England

In April, AAFA New England received a donation in Honor of Will Eddy a 6-year-old from Brookline who invited guests to his birthday party and asked them to, instead of bringing him presents, donate to a charity of their choice. One of his friends contributed \$50 to AAFA New England to help support people who need to use inhalers since his father has asthma and he has seen him

use his. Donations like this not only warm our hearts but help



AAFA New England serve its members and the community.

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Please remember to ask your company for a matching contribution to AAFA New England.

Around AAFA New England



World Asthma Day May 2, 2017

Executive Director of AAFA NE, Karen Calton, attended World Asthma Day at Boston Children's Hospital where she distributed educational material, played the "Asthma Challenge Game" with passers-by and spoke with many patients and families about asthma and how AAFA NE is helping to raise awareness, educate patients and families and support those suffering from this disease.

If you want to help raise money for AAFA NE, please contact Karen Calton, Karen@aafane.org Getting involved is the best way to help others!

Miss Granite State, Blair Stone at the Fundraiser at Not Your Average Joe's earlier this year.



Food Allergy Awareness Week 2017



Food Allergy Awareness Week 2017 was celebrated in a special way at the Florence Sawyer School in Bolton, MA, thanks to the initiative of fourth

grader, Catherine Dupuis, who has life-threatening food allergies. To help raise awareness, Catherine came up with the idea of making teal bow ties for her school community to wear on "Bow Tie Friday." When friends heard about her idea, many of whom have, or are affected by food allergies, they jumped in to help with the project. The result - over 900 duct tape bow ties were made and delivered to the school, and were worn by both students and staff to show their support of those living with life-

threatening food allergies. Catherine shared, "It was truly inspiring to see the entire school light up with teal bow ties. Each morning our principal shared important facts about food allergies with the other students, this was a great way to reach everyone. I chose this project because I wanted to raise awareness for those living with life threatening food allergies, like myself." ***Congratulations, Catherine, for helping to raise awareness about food allergies in such a creative way!***



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share your thoughts.

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