

Asthma & Allergy Bulletin

ASTHMA AND ALLERGY FOUNDATION OF AMERICA • NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

SAVE THE DATES!

2026 Fall Gala and Exhibit



2026 Fall Gala and Exhibit
Friday, October 23, 2026
6pm-10pm

Join us for this special evening designed for the AAFA New England Community!



March 31, 2026
7pm-8pm

"De-Labeling Drug Allergies"

Presented by Ashley F McLellan, MSN, RN, CPNP

See page 5 to learn more!



Subscribe to AAFA New England's YouTube channel!

All previously recorded Speaker Series webinars are posted. If you miss a live program, you can watch them anytime on YouTube: @aafanewengland4142

Staying Safe this Winter Viral Season

By Zara Rafi Atal, MD

Winter is in full swing. With cold weather, and increased time indoors, we've seen record high rates of flu, along with RSV, the common cold, and COVID. People with asthma are at particularly high risk for severe complications, such as pneumonia, from influenza and other respiratory illnesses, which can lead to missed school or workdays or more serious consequences like hospital stays.

To keep you and your child safe, healthy, and thriving this winter and spring, follow these prevention and medication tips:



1. Stay up to date on recommended vaccines.

Respiratory illnesses are a common trigger for asthma flare-ups. The most effective way to protect yourself or your child with asthma is to stay up-to-date on vaccines. Having those around you immunized provides additional protection as they are less likely to pass on an infection to you. If you are vaccinated, even if you get a virus, you are less likely to have a prolonged or serious illness, or to spread the disease to your loved ones.

While the ideal time to receive your Flu and COVID vaccines is in October, it is not too late to be vaccinated anytime through the end of Spring. In addition to your annual Flu and COVID shots, talk to your doctor about additional vaccines that may be available to prevent RSV and bacterial Pneumonia.

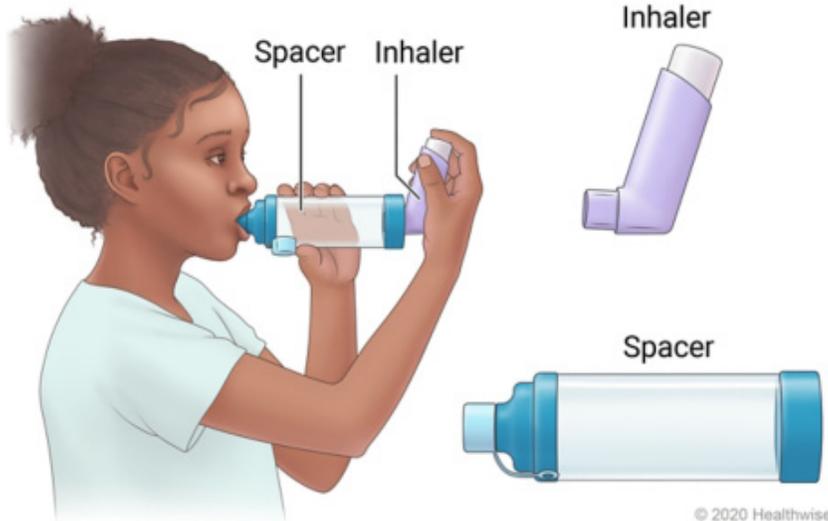
2. Stay on top of medications and refills.

Asthma medications largely come in two forms – controller medications to prevent your symptoms and rescue medications to treat acute symptoms. For some patients, you may have one medication (e.g. Symbicort or Dulera) that serves as both your controller and your rescue inhaler. Ensuring you take your medications as prescribed helps keep your asthma controlled, prevents severe illness, and keep you doing the things you love to do. Regularly checking that your prescriptions are up to date and that you have refills available prevents any last-minute scrambles or missed doses. Pharmacies don't always have every medicine in stock, so to ensure you always have an up-to-date supply of daily medications, consider talking to your doctor and pharmacy about 90-day prescriptions mailed to your house.

3. Always use a spacer.

Spacers are not just for little kids! For optimal medication delivery, anyone with asthma, regardless of age, should use a spacer. When an inhaler is used alone, medication is delivered largely to your mouth, throat, and stomach. It doesn't always get to your lungs! With a spacer, more medicine is delivered where we want it! Always shake your inhaler prior to placing it into the spacer and clean your spacer regularly.

Bonus tip: if taking an inhaled steroid, remember to rinse your mouth out after to prevent thrush, a fungal infection that looks like white patches on your tongue, inner cheeks, and throat.



© 2020 Healthwise



2026 AAFA New England Board of Directors

- Jan Hanson, MA, President
- Karen Roberto, MEd, BSN, RN, NCSN, Vice President
- Matthew Chin, CPA, Treasurer
- Emilé Baker, LICSW, Clerk
- Giovannie Bejin, MSN, BSN-RN, CPNP-PC, AE-C
- Christine Creter
- Margee Louisias, MD, MPH
- Meghan Neri
- Christy O'Brien, JD, MA
- Dianna Queheillant, CPNP, RN, AE-C
- Lori Rohleder

Medical Advisory Committee

- Jennifer LeBovidge, PhD
- Lisa Bartnikas, MD
- Wendy Elverson, RD, CSP, LDN
- Michael Pistiner, MD, MMSc
- Nancy Rotter, PhD
- Susan A. Rudders, MD
- Elizabeth TePas, MD

Honorary Directors

- Irving Bailit, MD
- Bette Barbadoro
- George Behrakis
- Cynthia Daley
- Joseph Ferney
- Hon. Gordon Martin Jr.
- Robert Stoker
- Frank J. Twarog, MD, PhD

Founding President

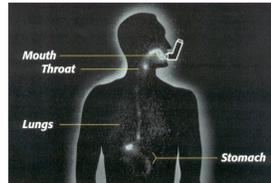
- Albert L. Sheffer, MD (1929-2015)

4. Check your environment.

Pests, like mice and cockroaches, as well as indoor allergens such as mold and dust can trigger an asthma flare up. Mice especially tend to gather inside in winter. Mold tends to build up in humidifiers, which can be prevented with daily water changes and regular deep cleaning. For extensive environmental issues, talk with your landlord, your physician's office, and your local department of health.

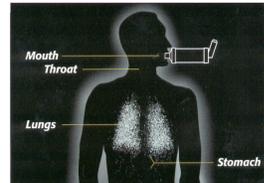
The above tips are designed to help you keep your asthma under control all year round, so you can do more of the things you love to do. With the right medications, vaccines, and environmental trigger management you can control your asthma instead of it controlling you!

Why use a Spacer with an Inhaler?



Inhaler alone

When an inhaler is used alone, medicine ends up in the mouth, throat, stomach and lungs.



Inhaler used with spacer device

When an inhaler is used with a spacer device, more medicine is delivered to the lungs.

*Comparative respiratory deposition of ^{99m}Tc labeled particles of albuterol using a metered dose inhaler, a metered dose inhaler with Aerochamber® spacer and Optic Chamber® spacer in healthy human volunteers using gamma-scintigraphy. R. Beilin, PhD, Scintipro, Inc., Indianapolis, IN and D. Doherty, MD, Dept. of Pulmonology, University of Kentucky Medical Center, Lexington, KY, 1997. Images kindly provided by Respironics HealthScan Inc.

Consortium for Infant and Child Health at Eastern Virginia Medical School, 855 W. Brambleton Ave., Norfolk, VA 23510, 757-668-6435



Zara Rafi Atal, MD is a General Academic Pediatric Fellow at Boston Children's where she practices as a General Pediatrician while completing her Masters in Public Health at Harvard T.H. Chan. Having had asthma, food allergies, and seasonal allergies herself since early childhood she is dedicated to the prevention and management of these diseases.

New Food Allergy Support Group in Medford, MA!

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America New England Chapter (AAFANE) has awarded Medford Public Schools (MPS) a Certificate of Affiliation for its Food Allergy Educational and Support Group.

The Support Group is dedicated to supporting, educating, and sharing information about food allergies within the school community. It is led by Co-Leaders Karen Roberto, recently retired school nurse and Vice President of AAFANE's Board of Directors, and school nurse Sara Kelly, with School Nurse Director Jennifer Silva. Patrick Sabia, MD, MPS will serve as Medical Advisor to the Food Allergy Support Group.

The most recent meeting brought together parents and caregivers, MPS school nurses, Food Service Director Retta Smith, school administrators including Interim Superintendent Dr. Suzanne B. Galusi, and School Committee members to collaborate, discuss needs, and strengthen awareness, inclusion, and safety for students with food allergies across the district. Safe snacks were provided by MPS Food Services, informational handouts were available, and door prizes were offered.

Meetings will be held both virtually and in person.

For more information about the MPS Food Allergy Educational and Support Group, please contact Co-Leaders Sara Kelly RN, skelly@medford.k12.ma.us or Karen Roberto, RN, kr Roberto@aol.com.

For more information about forming an AAFA New England-affiliated Support Group in New England, please contact AAFANE President Jan Hanson, janh@aafane.org.



Highlights from AAFA New England's 2025 *for life without limits*TM Fall Gala and Exhibit

AAFANE'S 2025 Fall Gala and Exhibit was another special, informative and impactful evening!

Patients, Family and Caregivers, Friends, Board members, Medical Professionals, Champions, Supporters and Sponsors connected and celebrated AAFA New England's work to improve quality of life for those impacted by asthma and allergic diseases!

Karen Hsu-Blatman, MD, MBA delivered an inspiring Keynote Address, "*Advocacy: A Catalyst for Change*" and shared her message of the value of advocacy to advance positive change in health initiatives.

Our 2025 Champions of the Asthma and Allergy Community:

Qian Yuan, MD, PhD, Janet Weintin, MSN, RN and Jill Robbins, PhD were recognized for their outstanding work and achievements in the field of asthma and allergies.

We are thankful for the support of our community! As we continue our work in 2026, our promise to you is that AAFA New England is committed to working hard every day to continue to assist our asthma and allergy community throughout all six New England states we serve.



2026 Fall Gala
and Exhibit



October 23

Mark your calendars and join us for our 2026 Fall Gala and Exhibit on October 23rd! Tickets, exhibits and sponsorships will be available on our website: asthmaandallergies.org.

Legislative Advocacy



AAFA New England continues to work actively to support and advocate for the passage of increased access to emergency stock epinephrine in Massachusetts.

H.4607 An Act relative to increasing access to epinephrine (previously H.2500)
H.4607 is currently with the House Ways and Means Committee. The language in H.4607 has expanded as compared to H.2500 and now includes language that would increase access to emergency stock epinephrine devices to prevent or treat a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction for **First Responders** (police, paid and volunteer fireman and medical technicians and **Authorized Entities** (restaurants, recreation camps, youth sports leagues, amusement parks, sports arenas, colleges and universities, etc.)

First responders and employees of authorized entities who have completed the required training as outlined in this bill may provide or administer needed emergency epinephrine in good faith, and not be subject to any civil or criminal liability.

H.590 An Act relative to emergency stock supply of epinephrine in schools

H.590 is currently with the House Ways and Means Committee. This bill is important because it would 'require' rather than 'allow' schools in Massachusetts (the current language of the law) to maintain a supply of stock emergency epinephrine devices. This non-patient specific stock epinephrine would be available to all students.

A school nurse or other trained authorized individual who provides, administers, or assists in the administration of stock epinephrine to a student believed in good faith to be having an anaphylactic reaction will not be liable for any civil or criminal liability, including the school district.

A Call to Action!

H.4607 and H.590 are both incredibly important bills for the allergic community in Massachusetts and if passed into law, will save lives. AAFA New England is asking our community in Massachusetts to either write, email or call the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Representative Aaron Michlewitz, to request that these bills be passed favorably out of his Committee and move them closer to the finish line.

Please take just a moment and contact Chairman Michlewitz to ask for his support of H.4607 and H.590 (reference these bills in your communication) by contacting him in one of the following ways:

Phone: 617-722-2990

Email: Aaron.M.Michlewitz@mahouse.gov

Mailing Address: Chairman Aaron Michlewitz, House Ways and Means Committee, Room 243, Boston, MA 02133

Every voice matters!

AAFA New England thanks you for your support of these important bills!

Advocacy is a catalyst for change! Join our email list when you visit asthmaandallergies.org so that you receive notifications about the bills AAFA New England is working on. We will share updates via email and social media regarding specific ways you can get involved.

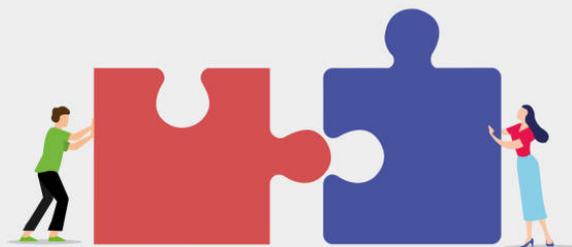
AAFA New England is Hiring!

AAFA New England's Board of Directors is excited to announce that it is looking for two dynamic, self-directed individuals to join our Team as our **Executive Director** and our **Coordinator of Education and Outreach**. Both positions are part-time.

For job descriptions of each position, please visit www.asthmaandallergies.org.

If you are interested in joining our team and would like to apply for one of these positions, please email a cover letter and your resume/CV to jobs@aafane.org.

Visit asthmaandallergies.org to learn more about our organization.



AAFA New England: News & Notes



Webinar Coming this March!

“Demystifying and De-labeling Drug Allergies”

Date: Tuesday, March 31

Time: 7pm – 8PM

Ashley McLellan, MSN, RN, CPNP, a pediatric nurse with the Allergy and Asthma Program at Boston Children’s Hospital, will share information about what “de-labeling” antibiotic drug allergy means and why this is important. Sign-up for this free and informative webinar today!

Visit asthmaandallergies.org/ to sign-up.

To view previously recorded Speaker Series webinars, such as our December 3, 2025 webinar, *“New Insights into Food Allergies: From Bed to Benchside (and Homestead!)”* presented by Andrew Wang, MD, PhD, AB, a principal investigator with the Food Allergy Science Initiative, please visit www.asthmaandallergies.org and look for our **“Speaker Series”** logo!

AAFA New England Welcomes Two New Board Members!

AAFA New England is thrilled to announce that Christine Creter and Lori Rohleder have joined AAFA New England’s Board of Directors!

Chris Creter is the founder and principal of Creter Group, a leadership development and performance strategy consulting company. She is passionate about food allergy education and was a speaker at AAFANE’s 2025 Food Allergy Conference and Expo.

Lori Rohleder has an extensive background in non-profit development and outreach and a strong interest in being a contributing member of a mission-based organization. She has a personal interest in the area of asthma and food allergies.

Lori and Chris are dedicated and skilled professionals who will bring new ideas, perspectives, passion and energy to our work for our community. Welcome Lori and Chris!

**AAFA NEW ENGLAND
RUNS FALMOUTH
2026**



For the 5th consecutive year, Team AAFANE will run in the **ASICS Falmouth Road Race on August 16th!** As part of the **Numbers for Nonprofits** program, our runners raise funds and awareness for AAFA New England to support the work we do for the asthma and allergy community. Last year, our team of 15 runners raised over \$20,000!



Interested in running with Team AAFANE? Contact Team Captain Meghan Neri, teamcaptain@aafane.org.

AAFA New England is excited to launch it’s 2nd \$10,000 Medical Research Grant!

AAFA New England is pleased to announce that its Board of Directors has approved the second time that a \$10,000 Medical Research Grant will be awarded to fund an early career investigator or trainee. The purpose of this award is intended to strengthen the ability of an early career investigator to conduct productive research through funding of a project in the areas of allergy and asthma that is consistent with our mission.

This is a 1-year-grant for up to \$10,000, with an expected start date of August 1, 2026. This grant will cover direct costs of the research project only. Applicants must conduct the proposed research through an institution located in New England. Applications will be judged on the quality of the applicant’s research plan. One grant will be awarded.

Information about how applications will be accepted will be posted on February 1, 2026, on AAFA New England’s website, <https://asthmaandallergies.org> and our social media. Applications must be submitted by May 15, 2026.

The first Medical Research Grant implemented three years ago funded the **Healthy Homes (HHOMES): Piloting an innovative, electronic medical record environmental health screening tool in an urban primary care asthma population.**

The positive results of this project resulted in plans to continue work on developing and implementing this environmental screening program and has produced resource materials now available in English and Spanish posted on the AAFANE and Boston Children’s Hospital websites.

More information about the 2023 **HHomes** project can be found in the **2024 Winter Asthma & Allergy Bulletin** on our website!

Clinical Research Studies: Opportunities to Get Involved!

FOOD ALLERGY CENTER



Mass General Hospital
for Children

Contact: Jannat Gill, Clinical Research Manager at Jgill0@mgh.harvard.edu to learn more.

OWED (Omalizumab Weight-based Dosing Efficacy) We are researching the efficacy of weight-based omalizumab dosing for food allergy especially for those that have high total IgE that fall outside the current dosing recommendations. Food allergic individuals ages 1-55 years are eligible. The study site is MGH, Boston.



University of Rochester

Looking to Better Understand the College Experience for Students with Food Allergy

Researchers from the Division of Allergy at the University of Rochester developed a survey to better understand the experience of students with IgE-mediated food allergies and what can affect allergy management while living away from home at college.

You are eligible to participate if:

1. You are 18 years or older with IgE-mediated food allergies AND
2. You currently live away from home while in college.

Your answers will help the medical community better understand the challenges of managing food allergies in college to hopefully help to guide medical teams in the future to better support students.

Please consider taking 10 minutes to complete a survey that may help other students with food allergies.



If you would like to learn more or participate, please click the link below or scan the QR Code.

<https://redcap.urmc.rochester.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=EKTAT8TH9K83HTWC>

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Theresa_Bingemann@URMC.Rochester.edu



Boston Children's Hospital
Until every child is well™

The Asthma/ Allergy Clinical Research Center Research Center is an National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded Center, currently recruiting for a number of studies for patients with asthma and/or allergies! All visits are compensated and all travel to and from the hospital is covered by the and from the hospital is covered by the research group. The studies also provide free medications. Call or email to see if you or your child is eligible for any of these exciting studies!

- **IDEA:** (Investigating Dupilumab's Effect on Asthma by genotype) In this research study, we want to learn if the study drug (Dupixent® Dupilumab) helps to control your asthma. We are particularly interested in understanding if people who have a certain genetic make-up (genotype) will respond better to this treatment. This study enrolls adolescents and adults age 12 and above. <https://ideaasthma.org/> <https://answers.childrenshospital.org/duplimab-asthma/>
- **CHEETAH:** (Mechanisms Underlying Asthma Symptoms and Exacerbations Across T2 status in children). We are studying if there are different mechanisms in asthma symptoms during asthma exacerbations. Children age 6-17 with asthma and healthy controls are eligible.
- **School Inner-City Asthma Study-3:** We are evaluating whether children and adults with or without asthma have novel signatures in asthma control. Children and adults 5 and above including healthy controls are eligible.
- **Radon Asthma Intervention Trial (ROME):** We are evaluating whether a Radon Mitigation System can reduce asthma in children and adults age 5 and above.

Boston Children's Hospital studies provide free treatments, compensation \$\$ for time and travel. For more information about any of the above BCH studies and/or to refer potential interested families, please call 857-218-5336 or email asthma@childrens.harvard.edu <https://bchastmaresearch.com>

Do you or your child have asthma?

Have you had an asthma attack in the past year?

You could be eligible to participate in asthma and allergy research with Boston Children's Asthma and Allergy Clinical Research Center.



If you or your child have:

- Allergies • Coughing
- Asthma • Wheezing • Eczema

Individuals without the above conditions may also be eligible to participate

Compensation is up to \$2,540, depending on the study.



Thank You To Our Corporate Partners!

AAFA New England is grateful for the support of our Corporate Partners, Sponsors and Exhibitors. Their generous support, partnership and participation truly does make our work possible!



**The Thoracic
Foundation**



Published with a grant from the Thoracic Foundation

Asthma & Allergy Bulletin

The Asthma & Allergy Bulletin is published three times each year by the Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America – New England Chapter (AAFA New England) and is mailed to more than 3,000 members of our community.

Information in this Bulletin should not be used as a substitute for responsible professional care to diagnose and treat specific symptoms and illness. Any reference to available products and procedures should not be construed as an endorsement. AAFA New England, including all parties to or associated with this Bulletin, will not be held responsible for any action taken by readers as a result of the Bulletin.

AAFA New England, founded in 1979, is a charitable 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life for people living with or caring for someone with asthma, allergies (including food allergies) and related diseases. Serving all six New England states, we are committed to raising awareness about disease management and reducing health disparities through educational programming, patient support, advocacy and support of medical research.

©2026. All rights reserved. Material may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher.

How To Support AAFA New England There are many ways!

- Make a one-time, tax-deductible contribution *
- Set up a recurring monthly donation*
- Make a Qualified Charitable Donation (QCD) from your IRA
- Recommend a grant from your Donor Advised Fund (DAF)
- Increase your contribution if your employer has a matching gift program
- Celebrate someone with a tribute
- Attend our Food Allergy Conference & Expo
- Join us at our 2025 Fall Gala and Exhibit
- Support a Team AFFANE runner in the Falmouth Road Race
- Contribute to our Medical Research Grant
- Become a Corporate Partner, Sponsor or Exhibitor

*Online contributions can be made at asthmaandallergies.org
Checks, made payable to AAFA New England can be mailed to:

AAFA New England
25 Braintree Hill Office Park, Suite 200,
Braintree, MA 02184

**Every Contribution Counts!
Thank you!**

Thank You To Our Community

On behalf of AAFA New England's Board of Directors and Medical Advisory Committee, we sincerely thank you for your support in 2025. Because of your generosity, we had an amazing and productive year, and have worked tirelessly to improve quality of life for all impacted by asthma, allergies, and related diseases.



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America®
NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

25 BRAINTREE HILL OFFICE PARK, SUITE 200
BRAINTREE, MA 02184
Tel: 781-444-7778
E-mail: aafane@aafane.org
www.asthmaandallergies.org

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
PAID
BOSTON, MA
PERMIT NO.58109

Return Service Requested

New Medication to Treat Severe Asthma!

A new medicine called **Exdensur** (depemokimab), a biologic medicine, has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for teens and adults ages 12 and older with severe asthma. This medicine targets parts of the immune system that cause inflammation.

Exdensur should be used as an add-on treatment with your regular asthma medicines. Because this treatment was designed to last a long time in the body, people using it would only need a dose once every 6 months. Exdensur is manufactured by GSK.

AAFA New England is Your Community! Join Us To Get Involved

- Visit our website, asthmaandallergies.org and sign up to receive emails and important notices!
- Register for our Speaker Series webinars which are posted on our website and on our social media and learn trusted information from our experts!
- Advocate with us for changes in public policy that will benefit the asthma and allergy community!
- Spread Awareness by participating in our social media!
- Support AAFA New England: your donations help us all "for life without limits"™!
- Join us for AAFANE's 2026 Fall Gala and Exhibit on October 23!



for life without limits
AAFA
New England

DEDICATED TO THE CONTROL AND CURE OF ASTHMA AND ALLERGIES TO HELP PEOPLE LIVE ACTIVE, HEALTHIER LIVES

Education & Training
.....
Support Services
.....
Advocacy
.....
Research Support

All of our programs and services are funded through grants and charitable donations

Donate or become a member of AAFA New England at: asthmaandallergies.org

Find Us On Social Media!

Facebook
www.facebook.com/AAFANewEngland

Twitter
[@AAFANE](https://twitter.com/AAFANE)

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel!
[@aafanewengland4142](https://www.youtube.com/@aafanewengland4142)

Instagram
[@allergyasthmanewengland](https://www.instagram.com/allergyasthmanewengland)

LinkedIn
[aafa-new-england](https://www.linkedin.com/company/aafa-new-england)