

Welcome to AFD TV!

I am Dr Steve Samudrala with America's Family Doctors and today we have our special guest, Dr Aaron Milstone Associate Professor of Pulmonology from Vanderbilt University and Williamson Medical Center. Dr Milstone, Welcome to AFD TV!

Thanks Dr Sam, I am happy to be here!

Today we have some questions from our viewers. Our first question is from Amber from Brentwood. The question is on Allergies and Asthma. Aaron, why is it asthma and allergies rising?

Well, Amber brings up very important question. One of the reasons that asthma and allergies appear to be on the rise is that we're much better today about making the diagnosis of asthma and allergies than we ever used to be. There's more use of diagnostic tools like pulmonary function testing being used in the office, so more people are being diagnosed with these problems.

Great. And, Aaron tell me more about the rising concerns for indoor air quality.

Indoor air quality is a major problem, and as we get better and better at building houses and businesses we essentially seal in the air within these structures and there's no circulation of air, so what happens is that dust and other allergens tend to build up over time and eventually overwhelm our body's response to fight off an allergic response to these problems.

Do you think allergies are worse this year in Middle TN?

Absolutely. I think what's happened this year in TN is that we've had a very wet spring, and the more humidity in the air and the wetter the environment is, the more likely we are to breathe things like mold and pollens that are less apt to move out of the environment.

What can we do to lessen our allergy symptoms?

Wells this is a difficult question because lessening our allergy symptoms really comes as two matters. One is to find out first what you're allergic to, and then target medical therapy against that particular item, whether it's pollen or dust or molds. In addition it's very important to treat other problems that the patient may have that may be exacerbating their allergies; for instance if they have nasal drainage or if they have reflux disease that can sometimes make allergies worse.

What can we do to treat asthma?

Asthma treatment comes in a number of different ways. Certainly there are medications so seeing your family practitioner or pulmonologist about medical therapy is important. There's also a lot that we can do in the environment to help treat our asthma. Keeping your indoor air quality good, preventing exposure to certain allergies that you know trigger your asthma, and again even treating acid reflux disease are important in asthmatics.

What are the best screening methods to detect asthma and allergies?

Well there are two ways to do this. First on asthma; the best way is really due to something called pulmonary function testing. What happens in pulmonary function testing is that you're able to measure a patient's lung capacity when they have an asthma exacerbation the lung capacity goes down, and so that's very suggestive of asthma. As far as screening for allergies, that can be done either through blood testing looking for a response to allergies or something called skin testing where your body is exposed to a number of allergens under the skin and your doctor reads to see whether or not you have a skin reaction to those allergens.

Thanks so much Aaron for sharing with us on Asthma and Allergies. As always if you or your friends and family are concerned about allergies and asthma, feel free to email or call us and make an appointment to discuss this further.

For next week on AFD TV, we will be presenting "Smoking- why should we now quit and is Chantix right for me?"

From all of us at AFD TV, wishing you a Happy and Healthy Week!