



# Healthy Headlines



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## How To Keep Asthma And Allergies Under Control On Vacation

### 2 Months Out:

- Schedule a check-up with your physician. Review symptoms, frequency, sleep patterns
- Request prescription refills
- Ask the best way to contact the physician if help is needed
- If your child uses a nebulizer, ask for a prescription for a small, battery powered unit that is easy to carry
- Research hotels for allergy-friendly rooms with air cleaners and dust mite proof bedding. Ask for pet free rooms. Book rooms away from pools and parking lots to reduce exposure to chemicals and exhaust

### 1 Month Out:

- Collect all paperwork. Scan information into a smartphone or a mobile device
- Bring copies of asthma/allergy emergency action plans

- Make sure you have the doctor's contact information
- Make a list of all medications family members take. Include brand names, generic names, and dosages in case replacements are needed
- Review health insurance information. Make sure you have your insurance card. Check if there is out of town/state coverage. Consider travel insurance

### 2 Weeks Out:

- Check and make sure you have refilled all prescriptions; if traveling abroad make sure you have back-ups
- Check and clean any medical devices that will be used during vacation. Again, do not place these items in checked baggage
- Research hospitals and pharmacies at your travel destinations and along travel routes. Store addresses/phone numbers in your smartphone

- Check with the pharmacist on the best way to store medications during travel.

### 1 Week Out:

- Check and make sure you have an appropriate method to carry all medical supplies
- If flying with food allergies, check with the airlines to ask about special accommodations such as: early board to wipe down seats, adequate overhead storage for medical supplies, and flight specific replacement of allergen free snacks/meals
- If travelling by car, give the car a thorough cleaning

### Departure Day:

- Pack enough food and water to last in case of travel delays
- If flying, keep all medical supplies in carry-on luggage. Keep them close: at your seat or in an overhead bin directly over you or across from you
- Lastly, **ENJOY YOUR TRIP!**

### Summer Eats: Free Meals for Kids & Teens

The Summer Food Service Program known as Summer Eats in Massachusetts is a free resource for children across the state who qualify for free or reduced-price meals during the school year. The meals and programming provided at summer meals sites help to ensure that children have continued access to nutritious food during the summer months and can return to school healthy and ready to learn. For further information on available sites in Plymouth, contact the Child Nutrition Outreach Program at Project Bread; call (617) 723-5000, or email at

[CNOP@ProjectBread.org](mailto:CNOP@ProjectBread.org)

### A Child's Right to an Education'

Does your family lives in any of the following situations: in a shelter, in a motel or campground due to lack of an alternative adequate accommodation, in a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station, doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship? If so your school-age children may qualify for certain rights and protections regarding their education under the federal McKinney-Vento Act. For more information, contact the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Call (781) 338-3700, or email them at:

[compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu)

### New Allergy Treatment Guidelines

Allergists have released new guidelines on how to treat the runny nose, sneezing and itchy eyes of allergic rhinitis. The guidelines say that corticosteroid nasal sprays are the most reliable choice for most people, more effective than antihistamine liquids and tablets. For moderate to severe allergies, recommendations are to use an antihistamine nasal spray (available by prescription), along with the corticosteroid spray. The guidelines highlight the importance of shared decision making between the physician and the patient to set up a personalized treatment plan since each individuals' allergies and treatment needs are unique.



## Epinephrine Auto Injectors: Storage Tips for Home and on the Go



Epinephrine is the 1st line of treatment for someone experiencing an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis. It is important to know how to properly store this medication to maintain its potency.



**Temperature Matters:** Epinephrine should remain at regular room temperature (68 to 77 degrees F). It should not be exposed to temperature extremes for long periods of time. Left in a car during a hot summer day/night, or a cold day/night, the epinephrine may degrade and may no longer be reliable. Do not keep epinephrine in a refrigerator or freezer, or stored with ice packs.

**Keep Them Together:** Epinephrine auto injectors come in packages of 2 for a reason. It is estimated that 15-30% of anaphylaxis episodes will require more than one dose to stop symptoms. This is why they should remain together. Students with auto injectors should have a separate two-pack for home and for school.

**Carrying an Epinephrine Auto Injector:** Store auto injectors in a safe place with easy access. Consider a medical carrying case that has insulation in order to keep the epinephrine at room temperature.

**Check Expiration Dates:** Epinephrine has about a year-long shelf life. Use a calendar or reminder on your smartphones to keep track of expiration dates. Make sure to check the expiration date located on the box the injectors come in and on the injector itself. If possible, inspect the epinephrine visually for particles and discoloration prior to administering the medication; do not use the epinephrine if it is colored, cloudy or contains particles.

**Using Expired Epinephrine:** During a severe reaction if the only auto injector available has expired, go ahead and use it as there **may be** active ingredients remaining. Taking expired epinephrine is better than no epinephrine at all.

**Remember:** Call 911 immediately after administration of an epinephrine auto injector. Stay with the individual in case a second dose is needed. Lastly, **Refill auto injector prescriptions when expired.**

## Loud Music And Its Effect On Hearing

Noise-induced hearing loss was once limited to construction workers, soldiers and drummers. As more children and teens use some type of digital audio player listening through ear buds or head phones, the potential for hearing loss increases. A recent study found that 1/2 of high school students had symptoms of hearing loss. These include: ringing in the ears and turned up volume on electronic devices. Additionally, people may seem to be mumbling even though they are speaking clearly.



Routine hearing screenings are tested at 20 decibels (dB). Noise louder than 85 dB can damage hair cells and nerves in the ear and contribute to hearing loss. An electric shaver is about this loud. Power tools, lawnmowers, hair dryers, are much louder. And then there is music. Dangerous noise levels are sounds louder than 80 dB and have to potential to be hazardous to hearing. Listed below are the average decibel levels of potentially dangerous sounds we are exposed to every day.

- 60-80dB; loud conversation, dishwasher, busy traffic, vacuum cleaner.
- 90-110dB; lawnmower, snowmobile, chain saw, rock music;
- 120-140dB; firearms, air raid sirens, jackhammer, jet plane take off.

To protect your child's hearing, speak with them about potential hearing loss. Most young people are not aware of the problem. Tell them to wear earplugs when noise level is high (going to a concert). Limit play time using ear buds/headphones to one hour a day at 60% volume. If someone standing by can hear the tunes coming from an digital audio player that the individual is listening to through ear buds/headphones, then the volume is much too loud. School nurses conduct routine hearing screenings on student every year, and will recommend an evaluation by a physician for any child who cannot identify sounds at 20dB.



## Summer Reminders:

- Sun Block (lots of it and reapply after water sports)
- Hydration (lots of it)
- Bicycle Safety (especially helmets)
- Water Safety (never swim alone)
- Insect Repellent
- Sleep: lots of it

See Health Services website for more information

<https://www.plymouth.k12.ma.us/Page/>

## Fall Reminders for School

- Updated Immunizations records for all students. Tdap and 2nd varicella required for 7th graders
- Recent physical exam for 3rd, 6th, 9th graders. Report any/all changes in health status
- Recent physical exam for student athletes
- Concussion training for student athletes and their parents
- Medications with physician's signed order and signed Parent Consents for each medication
- EpiPens, Inhalers, Seizure medications and diabetic supplies due Day 1

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