

NEWSLETTER

WEATHER CHANGES AND RISK FOR ILLNESS

Changes in weather can make us more susceptible to feeling unwell for several reasons. Dry weather can dry out the mucous membranes in your nose and throat causing irritation that leads to a cough, sore throat, and runny nose. Wind can cause allergens to circulate more in the air causing increased exposure to allergens that can lead to increased severity of allergy symptoms. Weather conditions such as a drought, increased rainfall, snow, and more can affect the length and severity of allergy seasons potentially leading to increased pollen counts and increased allergy symptoms. Changes in barometric pressures can lead to eustachian tube dysfunction, which causes ear pain, pressure in ears, and muffled hearing. Illnesses are typically more prevalent in the winter. People are more susceptible to illnesses at that time of year because you are typically spending more time inside and in close proximity to other people. The poor circulation of air and closer proximity to people outside of your household make spreading diseases easier. We have seen this same concept demonstrated during COVID as people have been encouraged to stay 6 feet apart and avoid indoor gatherings to prevent the spread of COVID!

MEET OUR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT: ALLISON SHUSTER



Allison Shuster is a Physician Assistant (PA) at Columbia Allergy's Fishers Landing and Salmon Creek offices in Washington. Allison graduated from Gannon University in Erie, PA with her master's in Physician Assistant Sciences in 2010. Originally from Pittsburgh, PA she has been living and working in the Pacific Northwest since 2016. She has experience in Rheumatology in addition to Asthma and Allergy.

Allison has proudly volunteered at Camp Blue Spruce since 2016. As a child, Allison participated in a summer camp for children with asthma- first as a camper and then as a counselor. She enjoys working towards giving Camp Blue Spruce campers the same camp experience she had as a kid. Outside of camp, Allison enjoys being outdoors, going to the gym, and baking.

As a PA her goal is to work closely with her patients to reach their allergy treatment goals for optimal symptom management. Allison cares for allergy and asthma patients of all ages. She, along with the other providers at Columbia Allergy, also provides food allergy desensitization treatments to patients with mild to severe allergies in the form of sublingual immunotherapy (SLIT) and oral immunotherapy (OIT).

**COOKING
WITH CAMP
BLUE
SPRUCE**

Columbia Allergy staff proudly volunteer at Camp Blue Spruce to help keep kids with food allergies stay safe while at a food allergy friendly summer camp. Camp Blue Spruce is offering cooking classes for kids and families with food allergies!

April's Cooking with Camp Blue Spruce class will feature a refrigerator chef approach!

What do you have in your fridge that needs to be used up?
Wouldn't it be great if your kids can help whip something up?!

Join Chef Joel and Mary Schaefer, Your Allergy Chefs, for this fun filled virtual & interactive class highlighting the many ways you can cook with what you have on hand and make something the whole family will love.

Date: Saturday, April 24th

Time: 2-3pm EST

Cost: \$30/class - financial assistance is available and all are welcome

Who's this for: Youth and teens ages 9 to 17 looking for a guided experience with opportunity for interaction with the chefs.



COVID CORNER

Helping a Friend with COVID

What groceries might you want to get a family member or friend with COVID?

If someone is diagnosed with COVID we recommend eating foods that can help boost your immune system as your body tries to fight off the virus. Any deficits in basic nutritional requirements can impair immune functions. While recovering from COVID, we recommend avoiding foods that contain empty calories, such as sugar sweetened cereals, pastries, sweetened applesauce, sugary juices as you are less likely to meet your nutritional needs with these types of foods. A varied diet that includes adequate macronutrients (carbohydrates, fat, protein) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) for your age can help you to achieve optimal immune function. Following the dietary guidelines for the different food groups such as grains, dairy, vegetables, fruits and protein, and micronutrients outlined by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) is a great place to start. Research has shown that Vitamin C, Vitamin D, Vitamin E can help to stimulate the immune system, while Zinc is crucial for regulating the immune system. Fish oil and green tea can also have beneficial effects on the immune system and can help to reduce inflammation in the body. Foods rich in Vitamin C include citrus fruits, bell peppers, strawberries and tomatoes. Foods rich in Vitamin D include eggs and fish, fortified milk and cereals. Foods rich in Vitamin E include leafy green vegetables, whole grains, and nuts. Another important consideration is fiber in our diets. Fiber found oatmeal, fruits and vegetables is food for healthy bacteria that grow in our bowels. These bacteria have been found to be critical in maintaining a healthy immune system. Further, the pigments found in fruits and vegetables such as oranges, blueberries, tomatoes, and bell pepper are also very good for proper immune function. If the person with COVID is experiencing high temperatures or gastrointestinal symptoms, an electrolyte replacement drink may be a good option to keep the patient well hydrated.

What miscellaneous things/supplies might your family or friend need while they're sick with COVID that you could deliver for them?

In addition to food, some other items that may be useful for someone sick with COVID include over-the-counter medications, a thermometer, cool mist humidifier, a Neti-Pot, cleaning supplies, and extra masks. Over-the-counter medications can be helpful to manage symptoms associated with COVID. Tylenol can be helpful for managing fevers and body aches. Other medications to manage pre-existing conditions such as allergies may be helpful so that those conditions don't further exacerbate the COVID symptoms. Nasal sprays like Flonase and non-sedating antihistamines such as Zyrtec and Claritin may be helpful for managing allergy symptoms. Cough suppressants like dextromethorphan can be helpful in managing a persistent cough. A thermometer can help the patient track the extent of their illness at home and can be a useful tool when reporting symptoms and illness progression to their provider should they need medical attention. A cool mist humidifier can help to moisten the airway and reduce airway irritation which can make it more comfortable to breathe. A Neti-Pot can help to clear out the sinuses, keeping the nasal passages open for better airflow. If the person with COVID has other members in the household who are not sick, cleaning supplies may be helpful to wipe surfaces touched by the person to prevent further spread of the illness from persons within the same household. Masks should be worn when in public spaces in the household to prevent the spread of droplets, so additional masks may be helpful if the sick person has a limited supply.

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Columbia Allergy Clinic has 16 convenient locations across state lines in Fremont, Oakland, Redwood City, Sunnyvale, San Mateo, California; Clackamas and Gresham, Oregon; Bellevue, Fishers Landing, Longview, and Salmon Creek, Washington; and Eagle, Idaho.

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