

Asthma, allergies plus pandemic may pose 4th of July challenges

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(HealthDay)—The coronavirus pandemic makes planning for July 4th a

challenge this year, especially if someone in the family has allergies or asthma, an allergy expert says.

"This summer will see modifications in how people celebrate Independence Day," said Dr. J. Allen Meadows, president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.

"Some traditions like [fireworks](#) may go by the wayside, but frankly, fireworks can be really hard for those with [asthma](#) because smoke is a trigger for asthma symptoms. You may be better off getting creative with how you mark the day and sticking closer to home. With a little advance planning, your 4th of July can still be patriotic and fun for all," Meadows said in a college news release.

If you're trying to protect your family from COVID-19, it's best to avoid any events where there are crowds, such as parades and fireworks displays.

In general, steer clear of any smoke that can trigger asthma, including fireworks and campfires. If you and your family are out in public for any reason, wear masks.

Sudden temperature changes can trigger asthma symptoms, too, and that may include going from [high heat](#) outdoors to a cold, air-conditioned building, or jumping into a cold pool or lake. Indoor exercise may be the best option on a hot, humid day with high levels of ozone, Meadows advised.

If you're going into a [swimming pool](#), remember that while chlorine isn't an allergen, it is an irritant and can cause problems with eye and nose itching. It can also cause breathing problems in people with asthma.

Washing the affected area with [clean water](#) typically removes the

irritant, but sometimes a corticosteroid cream may need to be prescribed. Outdoor pools are usually less of a problem than indoor ones due to better air circulation.

Bees, wasps, hornets and other stinging insects also pose risks, and you need to be especially careful if you're allergic to stings.

Picnics and barbecues can attract insects, so wear shoes when walking in grass, and cover soft drink cans and food to prevent insects from getting in. If you have a bee [allergy](#), always carry two epinephrine autoinjectors (or "EpiPens") with you and make sure you and people with you know how to use them.

Epinephrine is the first line of defense against a severe allergic reaction and can be lifesaving, Meadows said.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [asthma](#).

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