

Are allergies complicating your child's asthma?

Cough, whistle, and wheeze. What's that sound?

You hear a whistle or wheezing sound when your child exhales. Your child complains of difficulty breathing. Or perhaps you notice your child is coughing with exercise or when at play or just has a persistent cough. Does this sound familiar? "If you've noticed your child with these symptoms he/she could be suffering from asthma," explains Mark Welch, DO at the Ear Nose Throat & Allergy Center.

Asthma affects more than five million children under the age of 18 causing it to be the most common chronic disorder in children and adolescents. Asthma is a chronic disorder of the airway where the tiny tubes that bring air into and out of the lungs are swollen and inflamed making it hard for a child to breath. "One of the most common triggers of asthma in childhood is allergens. Allergens can include pollens, molds, animal dander, house dust and even foods," added Dr. Mark Welch, OK only board certified – fellowship trained ENT Allergist.

What can you do if you think your child has asthma? The first step is to see your allergy/asthma specialist for proper diagnosis. Remembering there are other causes for coughing, whistling and wheezing in children and you want to make sure what is causing these symptoms in your child. If your child is diagnosed with asthma know that there are many safe medications to help treat and control asthma symptoms.

Physicians are increasingly promoting measures to help delay, prevent or reduce the risk for developing allergies and asthma in children. Welch added, "It is important to note that approximately 80% of all asthma is directly related to allergies. Therefore it is imperative to diagnose the underlying cause of asthma so that it can also be managed."

Welch clarified, "For example, if your child is found to have a food allergy, avoidance of the food may improve your child's asthma symptoms. In addition allergy drops or shots and a newly approved medication, known as anti-IgE, which stops an allergic reaction before it starts, may help prevent allergies and subsequent asthma."

If you have allergies or asthma or if they run in your family, talk to you're a board certified allergy specialist about finding the best way to keep you or your child breathing easy.

B. Mark Welch, D.O., F.A.O.C.C.O. is a Board Certified in Otolaryngology (Ear Nose Throat Specialist) who is both fellowship trained and board certified in Otolaryngic Allergy. He is the only ENT in Oklahoma with this specialized training and one of four in the nation. Completing this two year fellowship makes Dr. Welch uniquely qualified to test, treat, and administer allergy solutions that can complicate asthma. Give his office a call or log on to www.entallergycenter.com to schedule a consultation concerning you or your child's medical management of these types of problems.