

Athletes with Allergies & Asthma Can Play it Safe

As athletes of all ages take the field this summer, the most fearsome opponents for those with asthma and allergies might be triggers that can sideline even the toughest competitors.

Allergists Dr. Daniel Reichmuth and Dr. Sami Nallamshetty report everyone can stay in the game and make sure it's fun *and* safe by following these tips:

- **Give the coach a heads up** – Alert the coach to any allergic condition, as well as what to do in case of an emergency. Provide detailed instructions on where medications are kept on the field and on how to use injectable epinephrine in case of a severe allergic reaction.
- **Ensure safe snacking** – Snacks are the highlight of the game for little ones – except for the child who is allergic to peanuts, milk or other common snack food allergens. Before putting together the snack-assignment schedule, poll parents on [children's allergies](#) to find out if any foods should be avoided. Food allergies can be serious, so if you suspect you or your child suffer from them, see an allergist to get tested and develop a plan.
- **Beware of unexpected opponents** – Bees, wasps, hornets, yellow jackets and fire ants are some of the different critters that may hang out on or near sports fields that can pack a powerful punch if they sting or bite. When prescribed, administer injectable epinephrine and call 911 in the case of a serious reaction, including hives, difficulty breathing and swelling of the tongue.
- **Stock the first-aid kit** – Make room in the team first aid kit for latex-free bandages and antihistamines to treat minor allergic reactions. If you know you or your child has a life-threatening allergy, and when prescribed, make sure injectable epinephrine is with you at all times.
- **Find the right sport** – Sports that involve a lot of running – such as soccer, basketball and field hockey – can be tough for kids and adults with exercise-induced bronchoconstriction (EIB), commonly referred to as [exercise induced asthma](#). In addition to using your prescribed daily asthma control medications, use a short-acting, quick relief inhaler at least 20 minutes before exercise and warm up for at least 5-10 minutes before taking the field. If the amount of running is too much, consider switching to a more asthma friendly sport, such as baseball, golf or swimming. An allergist can advise you on [asthma treatment](#) options and help you manage EIB, a condition that affects up to 10 percent of the population and 80 percent to 90 percent of those with asthma.
- **Stop the sneezing** – To help head off a mid-at-bat sneezing fit due to allergies to grass, ragweed and other pollen-producing plants, take allergy medication before the game. Wash off the pollen and keep it from spreading around the house by jumping in the shower after the game.

“Getting the right treatment for your allergies and asthma levels the playing field,” note allergists Dr. Daniel Reichmuth and Dr. Sami Nallamshetty “No one should suffer or stop being active. You should be able to feel good and participate in your favorite sports.” To find out if asthma or allergies bother you or your child and come up with a plan to defeat them, visit a board certified allergist.



Dr. Daniel Reichmuth is a graduate of Indiana Medical School and at the University of South Florida. He completed his residency in internal medicine (and served as Chief Resident) and fellowships in both allergy and clinical immunology and clinical laboratory immunology. Dr. Reichmuth is dual board certified through the American Board of Allergy and Immunology (www.abai.org) and the American Board of Internal Medicine (www.abim.org). Dr. Reichmuth stays current in both of these boards (Allergy and Clinical Immunology and Internal Medicine) through Maintenance of Certification (MOC). The American Board of Allergy and Clinical Immunology is a conjoint board of The American Board of Pediatrics and the American Board of Internal Medicine. Dr. Reichmuth has also been selected by his peers in the *Best Doctors in America*® Database on numerous occasions. He is currently accepting new pediatric and adult patients at both his Wesley Chapel and Zephyrhills practice locations. Dr. Reichmuth can be reached at 813-779-8194.



Dr. Sami Nallamshetty is a graduate of Harvard Medical School in Boston where she completed a combined pediatric and adult allergy & immunology fellowship program at Brigham and Women's and Boston Children's Hospitals. She is double board certified in pediatric and adult allergy and immunology through the American Boards of Allergy and Immunology and Internal Medicine. She has been distinguished as a Fellow of the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology. Dr. Nallamshetty has published her research in top scientific journals and has been awarded several research grants. Dr. Nallamshetty can be reached at 813-388-6855.