

## **COLUMBIA ASTHMA & ALLERGY CLINIC**

### **HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT**

1. If you have symptoms associated with your nose, sinuses, or breathing, we often perform skin testing for inhalant allergies. If you take antihistamines they interfere with skin testing. For this reason, we recommend that you stop taking antihistamines 72 hours prior to your first appointment. Antihistamines include over the counter cough and cold medications, Claritin, Loratadine, Allegra, Zyrtec and Benadryl. Many sleeping pills also contain antihistamines and should also be avoided. In general, inhalers, eye drops, and nasal sprays do not interfere with skin testing. Please remember that your health is most important and stopping some medications may result in serious health consequences. Therefore it is best to continue taking your present medications before your first appointment if recommended by your doctor.
2. Bring in a current list of all medications that you are taking, including any over the counter medications and herbal medications with the dosage and instructions for each. Even better option is to bring the actual medication bottles or containers with you to your appointment.
3. Bring a list of any medication and food allergies that you may have and a description of the type of reaction you had to the medication and/or food.
4. Bring information regarding your primary care physician and your past medical history. If you can, bring detailed medical records of previous medical office visits or hospital admissions. This information will be very helpful in performing a comprehensive evaluation.
5. If you have any questions regarding any of these instructions, please do not hesitate to call us for clarification. Please allow approximately 2 hours for your first appointment.

### **TESTING FOR ASTHMA**

Sometimes we perform lung function testing in which we have you breathe into a hand-held device connected to a computer to determine whether or not you have asthma. This test can also determine how well your asthma is controlled with the current medications you are taking.

### **TESTING FOR ALLERGIES**

We frequently perform skin testing to determine if you have inhalant allergies and/or food allergies. Sometimes when skin testing is contraindicated or additional information is needed, we will perform a blood test to determine your allergic sensitivities.