

# Allergies & asthma: Keep sneezes & wheezes at bay this holiday season

November 28 2022, by Cara Murez

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It's possible to have a joy-filled holiday season while keeping allergies

and asthma in check.

Being aware of triggers is a key, according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI).

"While the holidays bring much joy, some of the good times can be derailed by allergy and asthma flares," said allergist [Dr. Kathleen May](#), president of ACAAI. "A few well-placed precautions can keep you healthy and get your new year off to a great start as well." Here are some tips to keep sneezing and wheezing at bay.

### **Food allergens:**

When you're invited to eat at someone else's house, tell your host about foods your family needs to avoid. Ask the [host](#) to mark containers so it's clear what is in them. When there's a potluck, let everyone involved know your restrictions. Or consider hosting at your home, which gives you more control over ingredients.

### **Decor dangers:**

Seasonal decorations have some hidden allergy triggers. Some people have [skin reactions](#) to terpene, which is found in [tree sap](#). Others may have a reaction if they inhale mold spores and pollen found on fresh trees and greenery. Consider washing your tree before bringing it inside. Even an artificial tree may need cleaning to remove dust and mold from the previous year. Consider cleaning other decorations before putting them up, too.

### **Viruses:**

Viruses can also cause your asthma to flare. Flu-related hospitalizations

are higher now than they've been at this time of year in decades, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Get a flu shot, the ACAAI suggests. Consider giving fist bumps and air kisses instead of hugs and real kisses, to avoid picking up extra germs.

## **Alcohol:**

Though it's not an allergy, some people have an intolerance to alcohol that shows up as a stuffy nose, headache and/or flushed skin immediately after drinking. This is seen most often with [red wine](#) and alcohol that has color. Consider sipping something non-alcoholic instead.

## **Stress:**

Think about ways to keep the season calm. Exercise can boost emotional balance. Consider working out indoors if the [cold weather](#) bothers your asthma. Or give yoga and meditation a try.

**More information:** Foodsafety.gov has more on [food allergies](#).

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