

Common Sense in **ALLERGY & ASTHMA**



Drunk Insects Add Sting to Fall

INSECTS GETTING DRUNK on moldy fruits and vegetables have caused many insect stings in recent weeks. Allergic reactions range from greater-than-normal local swelling to generalized hives to life-threatening anaphylaxis with throat closing and shock.

If you have insect sting allergy, follow these rules to reduce stings when outdoors: 1) Never drink from pop-top beverage cans, as insects may have flown inside. 2) Avoid garbage cans. 3) Avoid perfumes. 4) Wear white or earth tones, not black or bright colors. 5) Carry emergency medicines appropriate for your level of allergy.

Insect sting allergy kills dozens of people in the U.S. every year. Allergy shots with insect venom proteins provide very

close to 100% protection against life-threatening reactions. Beta blockers, commonly prescribed for blood pressure, heart disease, glaucoma and migraine, increase the severity and risk of death from allergic reactions. If you're sting allergic and need a beta blocker, your allergist should discuss risk management with the medical professional prescribing the beta blocker.

Dr. Coifman is the only South Jersey allergist chosen to teach in each of the continuing medical education programs of the two national allergy scientific societies. He has served on national meeting faculty for six separate programs on allergy management, as well as programs on other topics in his specialty.

Robert E. Coifman, M.D.
**Board Certified Adult &
Pediatric Allergist**



ALLERGY & ASTHMA
OF SOUTH JERSEY

Millville 856.825.4100

Galloway 609.652.1009

Web Site: www.aasj.com

E-mail: aasj@aasj.com

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