

AH-CHOO!!!

*Tis the season
to suffer...
from allergies*

By PAULA VESS
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SHELBY- Spring has arrived. The birds are singing, flowers are appearing and trees are beginning to show off new leaves. The earth is waking up from its winter nap. Unfortunately, when spring arrives, pollen tags along and for many people that means sniffing, sneezing and itchy, watery eyes.

Allergies affect about 50 million people in the U.S., with about 35 million of those suffering from seasonal allergic rhinitis – hay fever, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.

“One-third to one-half of the population has some kind of allergy,” said Dr. Mark Reiber, an ear, nose and throat physician with Cleveland County HealthCare System who specializes in allergies. “The incidence seems to be rising, and it seems to be growing faster in children.”

An allergy is the body’s overly sensitive reaction to an antigen, a protein molecule found in all allergic substances or allergens, such as pollen or pet dander. The same way a fever tells us the body is fighting off a germ, the itchy, watery eyes and sneezing are signs that our immune system is on the attack.

Allergies are hereditary. However, even when both parents have the same allergy, the chances of their child having that same allergy is only 50 percent. “There are many factors that regulate



Allergy sufferers know to always carry tissue during the worst of pollen season. The incidence of allergies seems to be rising, said Mark Reiber, MD, an ear, nose and throat physician with Cleveland County HealthCare System.

gene expression,” said Dr. Reiber. “Patients with the same allergy gene can have different expressions and show mild, moderate or severe symptoms.”

In addition to having the allergy gene for an antigen, a person must be exposed repeatedly to the cause of that allergy in order to develop symptoms. “Usually it takes about four or five exposures before you show symptoms,” said Dr. Reiber.

Unfortunately, those who suffer from allergies usually react to multiple things. “Rarely is anyone allergic to only one thing,” said Dr. Reiber.

An allergy has no cure, but it can be controlled. If you suffer from hay fever and can predict when your symptoms appear each year, you can take steps to lessen their severity. “Start taking your medication before symptoms begin,” said Dr. Reiber.

The body’s reaction to an allergy trigger is similar to an explosion. Taking medicine before you are exposed means your body has less antigen to fuel the explosion. Also take steps to reduce your level of exposure to the cause of your

allergies. This may mean staying indoors when pollen levels are high, closing the windows, wearing a mask when you garden or mow the lawn, and keeping your pet outdoors or at least out of your bedroom.

Most people can control their allergies by reducing their exposure and taking over-the-counter or prescription allergy medicine. For other people, very severe or persistent symptoms, recurrent sinus infections, disruption of sleep or other problems may require special treatment, called immunotherapy, or even surgery.

Immunotherapy involves exposing the body’s immune system to increasingly larger doses of an allergen in order to build up a person’s tolerance for that substance. This process takes years to complete and does not cure the allergy, but helps the person manage it better.

Allergies are a chronic condition and show no signs of disappearing. Perhaps the best defense is to educate yourself on the causes of your symptoms, consult a physician when necessary, and carry extra tissues in your pocket.



Dr. Reiber

Safe Kids Week

April 24-May 1

Prevention the best policy for sports injuries

It’s 6:00 p.m. and you’re trying to figure out how to be two places at once. Susie has a baseball game and Tommy has a soccer match across town at the same time. Spring sports season has begun!

“Parents are so busy, just trying to get kids where they need to be,” said Joan Mabry, RN, Safe Kids Co-Coordinator for Cleveland County HealthCare System, “but we need to be vigilant too and make sure our kids are safe while they play.”

More than 30 million children participate in sports each year, according to Safe Kids USA. Of those, about 3.5 million children ages 14 and younger receive medical treatment for a sports injury, and one in 10 ends up in an Emergency Department. Common children’s sports injuries include sprains, muscle strains and broken bones.

A more serious injury is concussion, a brain injury that can occur when a child suffers a bump or blow to the head, even one that seems minor. “This is the injury that is getting more and more attention,” said Mabry. “It can be dangerous because symptoms may not show up right away.”



When a child suffers a concussion, they may or may not lose consciousness, and symptoms can appear hours or even days after the injury occurs. Symptoms can include dizziness, nausea or vomiting, problems concentrating or memory problems.

If you suspect your child has a concussion, you should see a physician right away. Children should also see a physician before the season starts. Children participating in sports should have a pre-season physical every year. This is important to discover any unknown conditions that might put a child at risk for injury. During the season, coaches and parents need to make sure athletes wear the appropriate protective gear, warm up and stretch before games, and drink plenty of water before, during and after games.

It takes a little extra effort from coaches and parents, but protecting our children while they enjoy their favorite sport means they can have years of fun, safely. Don’t let your child be taken out of the game by a preventable sports injury.

MAY
2010



of HEALTH

Giving you
The Power

WINGS

Cancer Support Group

May 3 - 6 p.m.
CRMC Cancer Center
A support group for patients with all types of cancer. “Digital Mammograms vs. Traditional” Susie Goins, RTRM, CRMC Outpatient Radiology Clinic. For more information, please call 980-487-3025.

Expectant Grandparents

May 3 - 6-8 p.m.
Women’s Life Center Conference Room
To register, please call 980-487-3983.

Healthy Hearts

Support Group
May 4 - 11 a.m.
CRMC Cardiopulmonary Rehab Department
“Low Fat, Low Cholesterol” For more information, please call 980-487-3659.

Breastfeeding

Support Group & Mom to Mom Support Group
May 5 - 10 a.m.–Noon
Women’s Life Center Conference Room
Open to all breastfeeding mothers and nursing babies and expectant moms who are interested in breastfeeding. For more information, please call 980-487-3887 and 980-487-3983 to register.

Early Bird Pregnancy Class

May 5 - 6-8 p.m.
Women’s Life Center Conference Room
For couples who are in the early stages of pregnancy. Fee: \$10 per couple. To register, please call 980-487-3983.

Pink Ribbon Network

May 6 - Noon-1 p.m.
CRMC Oncology Services Board Room
A gathering for newly diagnosed breast cancer patients. “Peak Energy Performance for the Breast Cancer Patient” Dr. Robin Owings, Carolina Chiropractic Plus Shelby. Lunch served. To register, call 980-487-3757.

Bridges

CRMC Cancer Center
May 10 or May 24 - 2-3 p.m.
A special educational program to aid recovery during the post-operative period after a mastectomy or lumpectomy. Register two weeks after mastectomy or lumpectomy by calling 980-487-3757.

Diabetes Support Group

May 11 - 5:30 p.m.
CRMC Auditorium
“Peripheral Vascular Disease: New Surgical Procedures” Andrew Taylor, MD, Vascular Surgeon. For more information, please call 980-487-3953.

Car Seat Safety Class

May 13 - 5:15 p.m.
Women’s Life Center Conference Room
Information on current laws and how to keep your new baby safe while traveling. To register, please call 980-487-3983.

Kangaroo Kapers

May 15 - 6 p.m.
Women’s Life Center Conference Room
Provides children expecting a brother or sister a positive introduction to the hospital and to what life will be like with a new baby. Pre-registration is required. Please call 980-487-3983.

Infant and Child CPR Class

May 15 - 6-8 p.m.
Women’s Life Center Conference Room
For parents and other infant/child caregivers. Fee: \$10/person or \$15/couple. To register, please call 980-487-3983.

OB Tour

May 16 - 2-4 p.m.
Women’s Life Center Conference Room
A special tour for expectant parents. To register, please call 980-487-3983.

Daddy Boot Camp

May 19 - 6-9 p.m.
Women’s Life Center Conference Room
Dad lead training for expectant fathers. Fee: \$10. To register, please call 980-487-3983.

Lobby Blood Pressure Screen

May 25 - 11:30 a.m.–2 p.m.
CRMC Lobby

Parkinson’s Disease Support Group

May 25 - 6:30 p.m.
Life Enrichment Center
For more information, please call Linda at 704-484-0405 or email: linda@lifeenrichmentcenter.org.

Some programs may require pre-registration or appointments. Some require a fee. For more information, call 980-487-3903.



Free Diabetes Screening

Kings Mountain Hospital lobby • Thursday, April 29, 7:30 am-10 am

Blood glucose test and a screening test will be administered. Fasting is recommended but the tests can be performed even if the person has eaten. Certified diabetes educators will be on hand to interpret the results of the tests and provide basic information about diabetes.

For more information, call 980-487-3953.



Cleveland County HealthCare System