

The Practice That Makes Perfect...



Summer 2009 Newsletter, Volume I

Allergy Season Is In Full Bloom

By Anthony Vallarino, DO

You sneeze, your eyes are red, watering and itching, your nose runs, you have a tickle in your throat and you cough. Your sinuses fill and your head starts to ache. These may all be signs of airborne allergies. This week marks the beginning of summer and with several more warm months to come, allergy sufferers may not be seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

What are allergies?

Allergy symptoms are caused when the body's immune system overreacts to what would otherwise be a harmless substance, called an allergen. The body recognizes the allergen as an invader and launches an attack to destroy it. This causes the release of histamine, along with other substances, to defend the body against the allergen. Sometimes this defensive response can be an annoyance or life threatening.

What are common allergens?

Allergens can be dust, molds, weeds, trees, grasses, foods, insects, or animals, to name a few, and vary by geographic location. The following is a short list of the most common allergens.

Dust mites are a common household allergen and can cause allergy symptoms year round, they live in upholstery, carpeting, and bedding.

Pollen allergy or "hay fever" is another major cause of seasonal allergies. Trees, weeds, and

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MEET OUR PHYSICIAN

Dr. Anthony Vallarino graduated Medical School from Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, California, and completed his residency at Baylor Medical Center, Garland. Healthy Living and attention to the emotional



side of wellness are very important to Dr. Vallarino. He specializes in office-based outpatient procedures, newborn and pediatric care, contraception management and chronic medical conditions.

Dr. Vallarino's patient care philosophy is built upon a team approach. He believes the best outcomes result from open communication between the physician and patient with each working toward a common goal. "Listening is a critical aspect of patient care. My approach to care is based on a patient, doctor partnership with open communication and attention to the patient's overall health. I provide the most thoughtful, considerate and complete treatment possible". Dr. Vallarino is a caring, compassionate physician who treats his patients the way he would want his family to be treated- in a safe, open environment that promotes healing- he practices medicine with integrity. Dr. Vallarino also speaks Spanish fluently.

Outside the practice, Dr. Vallerino is happily married with two small children. He and his wife, both native Texans, live in McKinney, Texas. His interests include spending time with family, travel, movies, and collecting original comic book art.

2009 ☼ CALENDAR ☼ 2009

July

- 4th Melissa Celebration Freedom

August

- 1st- Anna Health Fair
- 12th- McKinney ISD New Teacher Reception
- 12th - Allen ISD New Teacher Reception

September

- 11th McKinney Chamber of Commerce Women's Alliance Meeting
- McKinney ISD Health Fair

Exceptional Healthcare For Our Community

MEET THE STAFF

Hi, my name is Yolanda Lopez and I am the Practice Manager at Family Health Center of Melissa. Our practice opened its new office in February, 2009. Prior to managing this practice I spent eight and a half years in an OB/GYN office. I have functioned in all capacities required in a medical office setting. The daily operational functions and face to face contact with patients are two of my favorite aspects of my position. Family Health is the most fulfilling experience I have had during my career in healthcare. Each day and each patient brings a different opportunity to contribute to the scope of care for the whole family. Outside the office I am a wife and mother of four active boys. My mother lives with us and helps make our lives better. We are very sports oriented, especially with soccer and football. We attend and serve at McKinney Fellowship Bible Church. I can't wait to meet you!



Megan Terrazas works as our Front Office Specialist. Her duties include scheduling patients, answering their questions, helping them with their medical records, verifying their insurance, as well as completing clerical tasks for the

office such as entering charges and patient payments and completing the daily reconciliation of visits and payments. Away from the office, her favorite times center around spending time with her husband and two sons, baking fancy cakes and desserts, growing vegetables and flowers, and taking care of their animals-dogs, goats, rabbits, snake, chickens and roosters.



Christine Mullins, R.N. works with Dr. Vallarino doing referrals, callbacks, patient education, in-house labs, allergy testing, spirometry, immunizations, and assisting with

procedures- her favorite! "Every day is different taking care of newborns to seniors which makes my job so interesting and fulfilling!" Christine trained at the University of San Francisco where she earned her BSN and public Health Certification. Her experience encompasses NICU, pediatric oncology, adolescent orthopedics, Med/surg and urgent care.

Sunshine can be beneficial by providing us with essential Vitamin D .
But.....



The sunshine can be harmful if we don't protect ourselves from its UV rays.
Wear Sunscreen and sunglasses

Our Philosophy

We believe in open communication with patients and will answer any questions you may have. We regularly ask for your feedback because patient satisfaction is our primary goal. Should you or a family member need to be referred to another physician for specialty care, we will help coordinate your care.

We invest in building relationships with our patients. These relationships are built with time and attentiveness, delivered in the context of competency and care.

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grasses release their pollen into the air, which causes flare-ups of allergy symptoms.

Molds are tiny fungi that grow both indoors and outdoors in warm moist environments. Outdoors they can be found around areas of slow water drainage or under piles of leaves. Indoors they can be found in the bathroom or clothes hamper, and typically produce a characteristic "musty" smell.

Pet allergens typically occur when an animal licks itself and the saliva dries to its fur or feathers. As the saliva dries tiny proteins break off and become airborne and linger in fabric, carpet, or furniture.

How are allergies treated?

The best treatment is identification, education, and avoidance. Here are some tips on avoiding airborne allergies.

- Keep house hold pets restricted to certain parts of the house (i.e. out of the bed rooms)
- Clean frequently
- Remove rugs and carpeting
- Use covers on mattresses and pillows
- Keep ceiling fans off to decrease the amount of circulating allergens
- Change out your air conditioner filter regularly
- Dust the blinds frequently

Oral and inhaled medications are also beneficial for troublesome symptoms. Sometimes people have significant trouble with allergies leading to persistent allergy symptoms, frequent sinus infections, and difficult to control asthma and may benefit from allergy shots (immunotherapy).

Immunotherapy is the process of giving the body escalating doses of known allergens and decreasing the allergic response over time. Immunotherapy is done under the supervision of a physician in the office. It has been done for over 90 years and has been generally safe and well tolerated. However, any time a known allergen is introduced into the body, the risk of a dangerous allergic reaction called anaphylaxis is present.

SUMMER HEAT AND BUG BITES

By Reena Daniel, M.D.
Healthcare Center of Craig Ranch

Summer is here and swimming, beach vacations and other outdoor activities will bring us in closer contact with the population of insects most of us dread. Bees, mosquitoes, fire ants and spiders are

all more active and abundant in our environment during this warmer time of the year. Our outside activities, especially in the garden, bring greater exposure for us and often disrupt these creatures making them more prone to bite.

Common stings of summer are from bumblebees, wasps, yellow jackets and hornets. Fire ant bites are also more prevalent as gardeners and warm weather lovers get outdoors. Spider bites are also common, but they are around all year and there is less of an increase during the summer months. You always want to be careful of Brown Recluse Spiders.

Bug bites are usually harmless but can be quite annoying because of the redness and itching. They shouldn't be larger than ten centimeters in diameter and these bites should not get worse with time. Most bites can be treated by applying ice or over the counter medicines for bites. Benadryl can be used for the itching and inflammation. If pain is associated with the bites, Ibuprofen and Advil work well. Bites will take approximately 3-5 days to go away if taken care of and if a person is NOT allergic. A small percentage of the population is allergic to various insect bites. Reactions can be mild to severe. Severe reactions involve pain at the site of the bite, nausea, cramping and hives. Anaphylactic shock is another dangerous allergic reaction requiring immediate attention and could result in death if not treated.

People who know they have severe allergic reactions to certain bites should carry an Epi-Pen for self administered medication called epinephrine. Minutes count, so if a reaction occurs do not delay getting treatment at the emergency room. During anaphylactic shock, inflammation of the brain and nerves can occur, as well as swelling in the throat to restrict breathing.

Reduce the number of bug bites by wearing protective clothing. Don't wear bright colors or perfume that attract bugs, and spray insecticides around the yard and house

There are bug sprays that can be used on yourself if you are going to be outdoors for extended periods of time. Keep children away from wasp nests and ant piles. Ensure happy summer fun by taking the right precautions while working or playing outside!

Skin Cancer : BEWARE

By Michael Parisi, DO
McKinney Adult Medicine

This is the time of year when we are most focused on the heat and the intensity of the sun. The sun is wonderful but the sun can become our enemy if we do not take advantage of the ways we can protect ourselves from the harm the sun can do to our skin. The main cause of skin cancer is excessive exposure to the sun. Excessive exposure and sunburn are preventable. People with light skin are at a greater risk, but skin cancer can happen to anyone. There also are hereditary factors that lead to skin cancer. Using protection against the sun, self examination and visits to a physician if you suspect an abnormality are your best defenses.

Melanoma (a type of skin cancer) causes the majority of deaths from skin cancer. It begins in the skin cells that produce melanin, the protective pigment that causes us to tan. The cells of Melanoma also produce melanin so the cancer appears on the skin in shades of tan, brown and black but it can be red or white. Melanoma can spread (metastasize) to other internal parts of the body. Early detection is very important for survival. It can appear suddenly or in or near a mole.

Basal cell and Squamous cell carcinoma are more common. These, too, are more commonly found in fair skinned people but can occur on anyone. The key to a cure for all three types of skin cancer is early detection and treatment. The best advice involves routine inspections of you body for any changes and skin examination by a dermatologist, especially if you have had excessive exposure to the sun in the past.

When examining yourself, here are some things to look for : Changes in the surface of a mole - The **A B C D** Rule

- **A** for asymmetry- one half does not match the

other half.

- **B** for border irregularity – The edges of the mole are ragged, scalloped, or poorly defined.
- **C** for color - The color is not the same throughout. Shade of brown, tan, maybe black and sometimes red, white and blue are present.
- **D** for diameter – Usually melanomas are larger than the size of a pencil eraser when diagnosed but they can be smaller. Changes including bleeding, itching, tenderness or pain means you should see a dermatologist.

Also, the appearance of a new bump, scaliness, oozing and bleeding are warning signs of Melanoma

So, how do you protect yourself? You’ve heard it all before.. now take it seriously!

- Apply sunscreen generously when you are outside. Re-apply every two hours and after swimming or sweating. Remember exposure occurs on cloudy days, too.
- Wear protective clothing- hats, sunglasses, long sleeved shirts, pants.
- Seek out the shade. The sun is the strongest between 10 am and 4 pm
- Remember that water, snow and sand reflect the rays of the sun, increasing your exposure.
- Avoid tanning beds. Everyone thinks a tan improves their looks but think of the consequences of your actions.
- Protect children. A lot of skin cancer in adults is a result of exposure as a child! Don’t depend on the sun for your vitamin D. Take a supplement instead.

Have a great, safe summer!

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