



University Pediatrics

Healthy News

Summer 2006

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ALLERGY TIPS



Everyone looks forward to the end of winter, but for many people the coming of spring means the return of seasonal allergy symptoms. These symptoms can include sneezing, nasal itching, nasal congestion, nasal drainage, cough, wheeze, and red, itchy eyes. Microscopic tree pollens are the main cause of these symptoms in the spring, but grass pollens appear in the early summer and weed pollens appear in the late summer and early fall months. Mold spores can also be a significant cause of allergy symptoms intermittently in the spring and summer months with a peak in late fall.

Symptoms can vary from mild to severe. Over-the-counter medications can sometimes help but many times are fraught with side effects such as drowsiness, agitation, or irritation of the nose. The good news is that there is much more that can be done. Successful allergy treatment begins with taking steps in controlling exposure to those

When over the counter medicines (OTC) are not helping or are causing bothersome side effects, your primary care physician can recommend medications that may be more beneficial. Patients with moderate to severe symptoms would most likely benefit from the addition of a prescription nasal spray that can actually help control allergies.

If symptoms are still difficult to control despite these measures, an allergist can assist in the following ways:

- * Confirm the diagnosis of allergy and identify an individual's allergic triggers.
- * Provide specific recommendations for avoidance of these triggers.
- * Discuss the potential benefit of immunotherapy (allergy shots), which can be very helpful especially with allergic asthma.

Dr. Jeffrey Shaw, a board-certified allergist, is available at University Family Allergy in Barboursville for expert allergy

SUN PROTECTION

Making sure your child's skin is protected from sun damage is an all-year-round job.

These simple tips can help:

- * Use sunscreen on your children throughout the year when going outside. The sun causes damage in winter as well as summer.
- * Apply sunscreen generously 1/2 hour before your child goes outside, even on days that are cloudy. Don't forget to apply sunscreen to ears and use SPF 15 lip balm.
- * Keep your children out of the sun during the most intense midday period, from about 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.
- * If you must take your baby out in direct sunlight, use a sunshade or umbrella, and be sure baby wears a wide-brimmed hat, pants, and long-sleeved shirt in a lightweight, tightly-woven fabric that will screen out much of the sun's rays.
- * Make sure your child's

things that are causing the allergy. The following list includes things that can lessen exposure to pollens and molds:

- * Keep house windows closed; instead use air conditioning.
- * Attempt to stay indoors during peak pollen activity (5-10 a.m.).
- * Keep car windows closed.
- * Plan vacations to low pollen areas (beaches, cruises) during troublesome seasons.
- * Avoid exposure to freshly cut grass or raking of leaves.
- * Do not dry bedding or clothing outdoors as they will collect pollen or mold.

evaluation for all ages. Appointments can be made by contacting his staff at **304- 733-9270**. Some insurance carriers may require a referral from your primary care provider.



sunglasses offer 100% UV filtration. Get wide-brimmed hats for your kids.

- * Provide plenty of fluids.

SUNSCREEN

An SPF of 15 allows only 1/15 (7%) of the sun's rays to get through and thereby extends `safe sun exposure from 20 minutes to 5 hours without sun burning. An SPF higher than 15 is rarely needed in most parts of the U.S. because protection against sunburn during the 4 hours between 10A.M. and 3 P.M. is usually sufficient. Fair-skinned children (with red or blond hair) need an SPF of 30. The simplest approach is to use an SPF of 15 or greater on all other children.

Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before exposure to the sun to give it time to penetrate the skin. Give special attention to nose, ears, cheeks and shoulders. Most products need to be reapplied every 3 to 4 hours, as well as immediately after swimming or profuse sweating. A "waterproof " sunscreen stays on for about 30 minutes in water.