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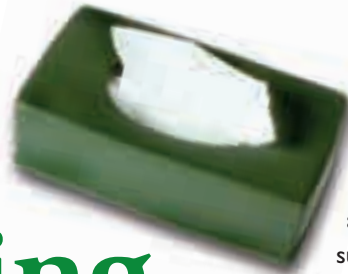
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there's something in the air

by birjis chinoy, m.d.



Allergic Conjunctivitis: Characterized by itchy, watery eyes. Allergic conjunctivitis is also commonly associated with the presence of other allergic diseases such as atopic dermatitis, allergic rhinitis and asthma.

Urticaria (hives): Characterized by the development of itchy, raised white bumps on the skin surrounded by an area of red inflammation. Acute urticaria is often caused by an allergy to foods or medication.

Atopic Dermatitis (eczema): Characterized by scaling and flaking and itching of the skin. In children, it may be aggravated by an allergy or irritant.

Sinusitis: Characterized by an inflammation of the sinuses, it frequently mimics the common cold. Symptoms of sinusitis include frontal head discomfort, facial pain that often worsen when patients are bending or straining, and yellow or green nasal discharge.

Food Allergy: Most prevalent in very young children and frequently outgrown, food allergies are characterized by a broad range of allergic reactions. Symptoms may include itching or swelling of lips or tongue; tightness of the throat with hoarseness; nausea and vomiting; diarrhea; occasionally chest tightness and wheezing; itching of the eyes; decreased blood pressure or loss of consciousness and anaphylaxis.

Insect Sting Allergy: Characterized by a variety of allergic reactions; stings cannot always be avoided and can happen to anyone. Symptoms include pain, itching and swelling at the sting site or over a larger area and can cause life-threatening reactions. Insects that sting include bees, hornets, wasps, yellow jackets, and fire and harvest ants.

Anaphylaxis: Characterized by life-threatening symptoms. This is a medical emergency and the most severe form of allergic reaction. Symptoms include a sense of impending doom; generalized warmth or flush; tingling of palms, soles of feet or lips; light-headedness; bloating and chest tightness. These can progress into seizures, cardiac arrhythmia, shock and respiratory distress. Possible causes can be medications, vaccines, food, latex, and insect stings and bites.

THE HUMAN BODY IS REMARKABLE in that it can defend itself against harmful intruders such as bacterial and viral infections. However, sometimes the body's immune defense mechanisms overreact and harmless substances (known as allergens) such as pet dander, foods, pollens or dust are wrongly identified as foreign.

Foreign or native to North Texas, many residents suffer the consequences of natural substances in the air.

How do allergies develop?

Allergies and asthma can affect people irrespective of age, sex, ethnic origin or socioeconomic factors. Asthma

and allergic tendencies may also be inherited. In predisposed individuals, exposure to allergens, such as pollens, molds, dust mites, animal dander, occupational chemicals, foods, medicines and insect stings can trigger allergic reactions.

Allergens enter our bodies in a variety of ways. Inhaled into the nose and the lungs: Examples are airborne pollens of certain trees, grasses and weeds; house dust, which includes dust mite particles, mold spores, and cat and dog dander. Ingested by mouth, frequent offenders include shrimp, peanuts and other nuts. Injected, such as reactions to penicillin, several other injectable drugs, and stinging insect venom. Absorbed through the skin; poison ivy, sumac and oak.

MOST COMMON ALLERGIC DISEASES

Allergic Rhinitis (Hay fever): Characterized by nasal stuffiness, sneezing, nasal itching, clear nasal discharge, and itching of the roof of the mouth and/or ears.

Asthma: Characterized by narrowing of the airways. Symptoms include coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath or rapid breathing, chest tightness, occasional fatigue and slight chest pain.



“ ... sometimes the body's immune defense mechanisms overreact to harmless substances.”



MOST COMMON ALLERGENS IN FRISCO AND SURROUNDING AREAS

Trees: Box elder, Cedar/juniper, Oak, Mesquite, Ash, Cottonwood and Sycamore.

Grasses: Quack grass/wheatgrass, Redtop, Bermuda, Orchard, Rye, Timothy and Bluegrass/June and Johnson.

Weeds: Ragweed, Water hemp, Careless weed/pigweed, Lamb's quarters, Russian thistle, Marsh elder, Cocklebur Dock/sorrel and Plantain.

Molds: There are several thousand species of mold. They are most prevalent are decaying plants and leaves, compost and damp areas in the home, such as, leaky roofs and ceilings.

ALLERGY & ASTHMA TREATMENTS

The allergist has specialized training and expertise that can help identify causes and develop a treatment plan for your individual condition. Our goal is to enable you to lead a life that is normal and symptom-free as possible. Some of the methods that may be used by the allergist include:

Allergy testing: The allergist will usually perform specialized

tests to determine what allergens are involved.

Prevention: The most effective approach in treating asthma or allergies is to avoid the factors that trigger the condition in the first place. Even when it is not possible to completely avoid allergens, an allergist can design strategies for reducing exposure and preventing symptoms.

Prescription medications: A number of new and effective medications are available to treat both asthma and allergies.

Immunotherapy (allergy shots): In this treatment, patients are injected over the course of time with gradually increasing doses of the substance to which they are allergic. In many cases, the body's reaction to the substance becomes less pronounced over time and in some cases can disappear altogether.

Dr. Birjis Chinoy is an allergy and asthma specialist practicing in Frisco.

