



## 2015 COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER – SUMMER EDITION

### ‘MEDICAL CORNER’

#### SEASONAL ALLERGIES

by **Dr. Zainool Mohamed, Chief of Medical Staff – LHCC**

Once again it is Spring and we are plagued by seasonal allergies. If you sneeze, cough or your nose and eyes itch and run during certain times of the year these are seasonal allergies.

The most common triggers are grass, pollen and mold because this is what occurs in this season. As well, in our area, we have snow mold. There can also be unique triggers like specific flowers or pollens and sometimes just grass pollen cause the seasonal allergy. In addition, seasonal allergies can be triggered by smoke, insect bites, chlorine in swimming pools, candied ingredients and pine trees and reeds.

Some people often think that season allergies are one thing but sometimes it is a combination of two things which results in an allergy.

One of the common myths is that you have a cold. Remember that colds last up to fourteen days and maybe slightly more but don't go on for months on end. Usually colds are associated with some sort of a fever and this is usually lacking with seasonal allergies.

Treatment is very simple. The first thing to do is to avoid the allergen. Unfortunately, this is very difficult to do if you do not know what the allergen is. Previously, I was very much against allergy testing because there was not much we could do if you knew what you were allergic to. More recently, I attended a conference and the speaker indicated that testing for allergies does help the patient because sometimes people are unaware that they may be allergic to dust, trees, mold or flowers. By giving them this information they can better plan their garden, their yard work or their exposure. The testing is done in the doctor's office and the nurse provides information that can be truly valuable.

#### **Seasonal Allergies – continued ..**

Some of the basic methods to prevent seasonal allergies and their symptoms are:

1. Saline solution – this is plain salt water which is mixed up in a certain way. The solution can be bought at any pharmacy. The plan is to flush out the nose and the sinus cavities for a two to three day period as frequently as possible. This would be akin to washing your hands. You keep on washing until the stain goes away.
2. The second thing would be an allergy pill. This could be any kind of non-sedating antihistamine. Suggestions for this can be obtained at your local family doctor.
3. The last thing is a prescription. It is a steroid nasal spray. All of them do work. Some of them are more effective than others and your family doctor can give you some direction in regards to this.

With regards to preparation for the future, I have been advising my patients to treat themselves for two weeks and then to stop the treatment and then to repeat if the allergies come back. The reason for this is seasonal allergies should continue the whole season. Seasons usually last three to four months and so there is no real quick fix.

I know we talk about just allergies. The important thing to recognize is that it is not life threatening and it does not lead to any serious disease. However, it does impair our enjoyment of the outdoors; as well, it does cause us concern that there might be a more serious illness underlying the allergy. Fortunately this is not true.

I therefore highly recommend that if you have any concerns; your family doctor and ask for an allergy test to put your mind at ease.

Have a good summer.

#### **Mission Statement**

We believe that whole ness of body, mind and spirit is God 's will for every person.

We are committed to the healing process, the promotion of health

and the provision of compassionate care co all persons.