



Lamont Health Care Centre

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2011 COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER – SUMMER EDITION

‘MEDICAL CORNER’

Summer Allergies

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

In a few more weeks we are going to be into summer and I would like to bring your attention to some of the precautions you can take to improve your enjoyment of the good weather we will experience during the next few weeks.

My first comment will address insect stings. I know that many people are highly allergic to insect bites and insect stings and they have come to me requesting an Epi-Pen (Adrenaline injection). I would like to remind everybody that although this is a fantastic form of treatment and is life saving, its main application is for people who are allergic enough that they cannot breathe or allergic enough that they collapse from a sting. Somebody who has a mild allergy does not necessarily have to have an Epi-Pen. The other thing about the Epi-Pen is that the single shot that it delivers is only good for 15-20 minutes. This is the maximum effect of the medication that is received. This implies that if you are half an hour away from a medical facility you actually need two Epi-Pens. This can run into quite an expense. My advice therefore is to have one Epi-Pen available for immediate use and then to ask your physician for a box of Adrenaline ampules and syringes to go with it. This allows you to draw up further shots in a separate syringe or to get help in order to do the drawing up and the administration if more than 15 minutes have elapsed since your last administration.

Other allergies that are quite common would be contact dermatitis. This would be with both products that we use to protect the skin from the sun and from mosquitoes and other insect bites. Given that children can be quite allergic to some of the ingredients in some of the medications it is advisable to apply a small amount of medication to the inner forearm before applying it to the entire body. Once the medication is applied to the forearm a person should wait between an hour and two hours to notice a reaction. If there is any redness or irritation of the skin on the inner forearm, my advice is not to use that particular product.

One of the common complaints that we get is colds during the summertime. More often than not I have found that these are not colds but rather a symptom of seasonal allergies. The most common diagnosis is allergic rhinitis, allergic conjunctivitis. Most people use cough medications for weeks on end in order to get rid of the cough that accompanies this particular allergy. This is not the appropriate treatment. My advice is a non-sedating histamine and this is available both for adults and for children and can be obtained over-the-counter.

I hope that this allows you to have a happy and safe summer and please feel free to contact your family physician if you have any other specific concerns.

Mission Statement

We believe that wholeness 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 to all persons.