

At a Glance.....

- ☞ Sun Protection: 'Protection is the Best Medicine'
- ☞ Telehealth Ontario.... 'It doesn't hurt to call'
- ☞ Watery Eyes? Runny Nose? Seasonal Allergies
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PROTECTION IS THE BEST MEDICINE



With spring vacations and summer approaching, it is time to start thinking about 'covering up' - with sunblock that is! You can still enjoy the sunshine while protecting yourself and your family. Most people are familiar with the campaigns to protect their skin. However, we always seem to need reminding, and preferably *before* that first sunburn!

Protection and Prevention;

- ✓SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor. This number is a multiplier that tells you how much longer you can remain in the sun without burning when wearing a sunblock. If your skin burns after 10 minutes of exposure, an SPF 15 should provide you with 15 times that, or 150 minutes of protection without burning.
- ✓The sun is 'strongest' between 10am and 3pm. Along with sunblock, you should also provide coverage by wearing hats and long sleeves.
- ✓Infants should never be exposed to direct sun. A child 6 months of age or younger should not be left to bask in the sun. Babies over the age of 6 months should be protected by a sunblock that is hypoallergenic and approved by a physician. Place children's swing sets, wading pools and toys in the shade.
- ✓Make the application of sunblock a part of your morning routine, especially on vacation!
- ✓Apply sunblock at least 30 minutes prior to sun exposure. Make sure ears, nose, back of neck, lips, shoulders and tops of feet are protected. (there are colored vanishing sunblock products for children to help you see where sunblock has been applied and areas that have been missed.)
- ✓If you are taking medication, consult your physician and/or pharmacist regarding 'sun sensitivity'.
- ✓Use sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- ✓Reflection of water, sand and even snow can intensify the sun's burning rays. Cover up children with an oversized t-shirt if they are playing on the beach for any length of time.
- ✧Sun damage cannot be reversed so....cover up!



First Aid for Sunburns:

Do:

- ☉Apply cool to lukewarm baths and compresses
- ☉Apply a soothing lotion ie. aloe vera gel
- ☉Over the counter medication can relieve the pain
- ☉Drink plenty of water

Do Not:

- ☉Apply petroleum jelly, ointment or butter - they make symptoms worse
- ☉Use over-the-counter creams/sprays containing benzocaine - this may cause allergic reactions, especially in children.
- ☉Re-expose skin - wait until the sunburn has completely healed and use appropriate protection.

Sources: Banana Boat: Sun Safety Tips, www.bananaboat-sun.com
WebMD/Lycos-Sunburn First Aid, webmd.lycos.com

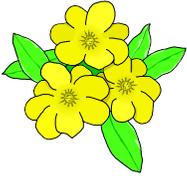


TELEHEALTH ONTARIO 'It Doesn't Hurt To Call'

Telehealth Ontario is part of the province's plan to improve the health system by providing quick, easy access to services closer to home...just a call away. You will be notified by the government of Ontario via mail once this service is available in your area. You will be able to access health advice from registered nurses 24 hours/day, 7days/week. You will also have access to recorded health information and a pharmacist advice line.

Please keep in mind that this service does not provide prescriptions, provide a diagnosis, replace having regular medical check-ups or replace the advice of your physician.

A call to Telehealth Ontario does not replace 911. If it's an emergency, call 911! Warning signs of a medical emergency include; fainting, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, sudden dizziness, weakness or change in vision, continuous bleeding, coughing or vomiting blood, severe/ persistent vomiting, sudden severe headache, chest or upper abdominal pain, change in mental status (unusual behaviour, confusion, difficulty rousing) or any medical symptom you feel requires immediate attention.



Allergies are Nothing to Sneeze At!!

Spring is traditionally the season that people associate with the onset of irritating allergy symptoms due to the new growth on trees and weeds. But, fall, with a whole different set of blooming plants, as well as leaf mold, is a

close second. People who are allergic to pollens are also often sensitive to dust mites, animal dander, and molds, which lurk indoors in any season.

What is an allergy? An **allergy** is the body's hypersensitivity to substances in the environment, while an **allergic reaction** is an overreaction of the body's immune system to a foreign substance, or allergen (usually one that it has been exposed to before). The body fights these allergens by producing an antibody in the intestines and lungs. This antibody triggers immune cells to release a number of chemicals, one of which is called histamine. Histamine is responsible for the symptoms of hives, watery eyes, sneezing and itching.

The goal is to determine what caused the allergic reaction, then to treat the symptoms. The treatment of allergic reactions depends on the severity of the symptoms. Allergic reactions range from mild itching, sneezing, or eczema (inflamed, itchy skin), to severe hives, hay fever, wheezing and shortness of breath. An extreme allergic reaction can result in anaphylactic shock, a life-threatening situation in which a person's airway swells shut and blood pressure drops.

TIPS

- always remove cause if possible
- antihistamines help treat the reaction
- decongestants may relieve congestion, watery eyes and sneezing
- for itching, try colloidal or oatmeal baths or calamine lotions
- do not smoke around children or their homes
- get a Medic Alert bracelet for your children with severe allergic reactions
- get an anaphylaxis kit (ana-kit) for your child with severe allergic reactions
- for seasonal allergies caused by plants and trees, keep windows shut and the air conditioner on
- use a dehumidifier in damp areas like the basement
- minimize clutter, book collections which collect dust and pollens
- keep pets outside or bathe them regularly if they're indoors, and don't let them sleep in your bed

Symptoms of allergic reactions can persist for up to 72 hours after exposure to the cause. It is important to be able to describe to your doctor what you may have been exposed to for the last 72 hours prior to symptoms beginning.

Although most people simply find allergies annoying, according to William Storms, M.D., an allergist "it is better to get good treatment than to let it go". It has been determined that allergies do affect an individual's quality of life, productivity and educational performance. Allergies, left untreated, may also lead to secondary diseases such as otitis media (ear infections), sinus infections and asthma.

Don't let allergies keep you indoors in any season. If you think you may have allergies, speak to your doctor about your concerns. Remember, your nose knows!!

Source: Allergic Reactions, www.medbroadcast.com

Watery Eyes? Runny Nose? Time to Spring into Action Against Seasonal Allergies, www.fda.gov

Medications/Treatments:

- ✓ Adrenaline (eg. Epi-Pen) an injected medicine used in bee-sting kits and ER departments to treat severe allergic reactions
- ✓ Antihistamines (eg. Claritin) used to reduce the histamine levels in the body. Histamine is what causes many symptoms of an allergic reaction
- ✓ Bronchodilators (eg. Ventolin) inhaled medications used to stop an asthma-like response and open airways to improve breathing
- ✓ Corticosteroids (eg. prednisone) strong anti-inflammatory medications used to help settle and prevent relapse in severe allergic reactions

Additional Sources for Resources:

www.medbroadcast.com
www.onreport.gov.on.ca
www.gov.on.ca/health/

MDM Insurance Services Inc.

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