

Allergies bringing people in for relief in record numbers

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There's been a steady stream of people coming in with allergies this year, the same as every year, said Dr. Patrick Wat of the Dr. Smith, Izzo and Wat practice. Wat said his own practice bears out the national trend as to an increase in allergy sufferers over the past decade or so. "I don't know whether it's because of pollution, an increase in bronchial problems or whether it's nutritional. Or maybe it's just that more people are going to doctors with their allergies than before."

For Dr. Salwa Marie Azer of Stouffville Family Physicians, it depends on the person as to whether one year is worse than another. "I've seen no major difference this year. It may be worse for some people because of the heat and humidity, but it really depends on the person and what they are allergic to," Azer said. Local conditions can cause problems for individual sufferers. "If you live beside a field full of ragweed, you're going to have a problem," Dr. Azer said. The best way for many people to minimize their suffering is to control their own environment. The installation of air conditioners and electronic air filters to reduce pollens in the air, vacuuming frequently, avoiding high pile carpets that

gather dust and having pets which can stay outside as much as possible can all help, she said.

The doctors agreed that it's best to take a step by step approach when going about the process of diagnosing allergies and prescribing medication. "If an anti-histamine can control it, fine, or nasal vaporizers or eye drops may be all that's needed," said Dr. Petrie. "If it's warranted, testing can then be done to find out exactly what the person is allergic to. They can then be given shots to desensitize them to the allergen."

But knowing what you've been allergic to in the past may not help this year, suggested Dr. Wat. "With some people, their sensitivity shifts in time. They can become better or they become allergic to other things."

Area pharmacists all said they were doing a brisk business in the better known over-the-counter hay fever medications this season. "By and large, people self-medicate for seasonal allergies," said Rob Croxall of Aiken's I.D.A. The non-sedative anti-histamines seem to be the most popular. Different anti-histamines work for different people.

But Croxall said it's important to begin taking the pills before the allergens strike.

"An anti-histamine doesn't reverse a reaction, it just prevents further reactions. It can take three or four days for it to work if the person is already suffering an allergic reaction," Croxall said. His store has been doing a brisk business in homeopathic allergy remedies this year as people look to natural remedies.



CROXALL

Lilly Eng of the Stouffville Shoppers Drug Mart said people tend to stick to the medications that have worked for them in the past. She said the past few years have seen a definite increase in customers coming into the store for allergy relief.

"Absolutely. More people are coming in with allergic symptoms like a runny nose, irritated eyes and congestion."

Lou Wassel of Houston's Pharmacy said there's more to it than just selling the customer a box of pills.

People with high blood pressure or heart problems should consult their doctor before buying allergy products, he warned, especially now that legislation has changed to allow

the over-the-counter sale of medications that once had to be prescribed by a physician. "You have to be specific and honest with the customer," said Wassel. "You can't just take his money and send him on his way with some product or other."

But while the doctors and pharmacists seem to share the same traditional approach to allergy treatment, Stouffville chiropractor Dr. Allen Turner goes about it in a different way.

Turner believes allergies result from a weakened immune system brought about by an improperly functioning digestive system. He said that by using chiropractic spinal adjustments to remove interference to nerves controlling the glands, controlling the immune system, allergic conditions can actually be reversed rather than controlled. By prescribing changes in diet and lifestyle and perhaps recommending nutritional supplements, permanent change can be affected, he said. "More and more people are getting tired of relying on drugs," said Dr. Turner.

So they are turning to things that are more natural. They're looking to get to the root of the problem rather than relieving the symptoms."

Old Fashioned SUMMER Activities for adults and children make for summertime fun



Antique Car Show

The antique and classic car show takes place at the Whitchurch Stouffville Museum on Aug. 13, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Heritage games and cooking, trade demonstrations, and crafts are also part of the fun. Fee: \$10 per family, \$4 per person, children under seven years of age get in free.

Summer Children's Program

A heritage cooking and craft workshop takes place at the Whitchurch Stouffville Museum from Aug. 23 to Aug. 25. There are morning as well as afternoon sessions. Fee: \$20. For information call 727-8954.

Summer Day Camp Programmes

Days of Discovery: A full day programme for four to nine-year-olds, includes sports, crafts, swimming, music, hiking, drama, environmental games, and more at Bruce's Mill Conservation Area. Fee: \$66 per week.

Boredom Buster Activity Camp: This full day programme is designed to keep youths active. Includes archery, swimming, tennis, cosom hockey, adventure golf, tennis, lawn bowling, shuffleboard, 3 on 3 basketball, field and co-operative games, and more. Geared for children ages nine to 12. Fee: \$85 per week.

Mad Scientists Week: This programme is designed around the wonders of the natural science present in our communities. Activities include water studies, plant/animal/insect observations, hiking throughout local trails, weather studies and more. This programme is geared to children aged 10 to 14. Fee: \$90. For more information about any of the camp programmes call the Parks and Recreation Department at 640-6527.

Mini Golf

Timber Creek Golf, open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and weekends from 9 a.m. offers special group rates for 10 players and up. The location also offers special prices for birthday party packages. For information call 642-5174.

Stouffville Library

On Aug. 5, local author Howard Stuart, will give a reading and presentation of his latest book, "T-Rex 2" at 10 a.m.

The Pagemaster's Challenge reading program continues throughout July and August during library hours. For information call 640-2395.

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