

Health Connection

A PUBLICATION OF
MEDICAL CENTER ENTERPRISE



Clear the air
How allergies can
affect you

When seconds count
MCE is here for you

**5 hidden
heart-disease
risk factors**

MEDICAL CENTER ENTERPRISE

Where Healthcare and Community Connect

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Allergens are in the air



Spring is here—and so are a lot of other substances that may be causing itchy, watery eyes, a runny nose and sneezing. If you have allergies, your body’s delicate balance can be knocked off-kilter by hundreds of environmental triggers like animals, plants, foods and medicines.

JUST THE FACTS

About 50 million individuals in the United States suffer from some form of allergies, and that number is growing. The cause of an allergy isn’t always known, but a family history of allergies may be a primary risk factor.

An allergy is a reaction by your body’s immune system to something that doesn’t typically bother other people, says the National Institutes of Health. Simply put, your body’s defense system sees a certain substance—called an allergen—as a threat and releases antibodies to fight it. Usually, people who have allergies have increased sensitivity to more than one allergen or group of allergens, such as certain types of grass and trees; dust and lint; pollen and mold; and animal fur. The most common food allergens are proteins in cow’s milk, eggs, peanuts, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish and tree nuts.

Allergic symptoms vary from person to person and can be seasonal or year-round. Reactions can range from mild to life threatening (particularly in cases of severe food allergies). Some people are born with allergies, while others develop them later in life. Specific types of allergic diseases include allergic rhinitis (hay fever),

! Seek help!

The friendly staff at Enterprise Express Care can help you. It’s located at 805 E. Lee St., Suite C. Walk-ins are welcome, or call (334) 348-8818 for an appointment.

sinusitis (swelling of the sinuses), serous otitis media (an allergic ear problem), conjunctivitis (red, itchy eyes) and hives (itchy, red bumps).

WHEN YOU NEED CARE

Call or visit Enterprise Express Care if you’re suffering any of the above symptoms. Head to the emergency room or call 911 if you have asthma (coughing or difficulty breathing) or anaphylaxis (a serious allergic reaction usually caused by foods, insect stings or exposure to chemicals such as latex). Anaphylaxis arises quickly and causes mild to severe symptoms: warmth, tingling in the mouth, a rash, faintness, shortness of breath, cramps, vomiting, diarrhea or a drop in blood pressure resulting in loss of consciousness or shock. If not immediately treated with an injection of epinephrine, this type of allergic reaction can be fatal.

! Get interactive!

Visit www.mcehospital.com and click on the “Health Resources” link to take interactive allergy, asthma awareness, food allergy or mold allergy quizzes. You can also use the asthma zone calculator to learn how the area you live in affects your health.

Dear friends,

We're pleased to provide you with our second issue of *Health Connection*, a community education magazine from Medical Center Enterprise. We continue to be proud of our connection to the community and will continue striving to keep you informed about the latest health-related information that will be beneficial to your well-being.



Jeffrey Brannon
Chief Executive Officer

CARE WHEN IT COUNTS

This issue focuses on our emergency room (ER) and the great work that's performed daily by our dedicated staff of physicians, clinicians and support personnel. Since 2002 when we opened the new ER, we've experienced tremendous growth—from 14,000 patient visits in 2001 to 29,000 visits in 2009. Our staff is keenly focused and equipped to care for life-threatening injuries (trauma, fractures, etc.) and illnesses (heart attack, stroke, etc.), while never losing sight of caring for minor needs. We've received some of the best results—on a regional and nationwide basis—for treatment of heart attacks, heart failure and pneumonia. Positive outcomes don't just happen by chance when it comes to emergency care. They happen because the dedicated professionals in our ER care for each life entrusted to them as if it were their own.

Thank you for the privilege of serving all your healthcare needs, especially those of an emergent nature. Wishing you a safe and enjoyable spring and summer!

Best regards,

JEFFREY BRANNON
Chief Executive Officer
Medical Center Enterprise
Where Healthcare and Community Connect

Avoiding allergens

In addition to physician-prescribed treatment methods, take simple steps to control your allergy symptoms:

- **Stay tuned to the forecast.** The National Allergy Bureau (www.aaaai.org/nab/index.cfm) reports current pollen and mold spore levels around the country. You can check your area's forecast and sign up for e-mail alerts.
- **Remain indoors during peak pollen periods.** When outdoor pollen levels are highest—particularly on sunny, windy days—consider staying indoors with the windows closed during the morning hours.
- **Protect your nose and mouth.** If you must go outdoors, consider wearing a face mask designed to filter pollen out of the air and prevent it from reaching nasal passages.
- **Use your home and car air-filtering systems.** Your home and car air conditioners can help keep out pollen and mold allergens when placed on the do-not-circulate mode. HEPA and other special air filters are available to help reduce allergens produced in the home.

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The information contained in this publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. If you have medical concerns, please consult your healthcare provider.

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When emergency strikes ...

Our ER is here for you

We understand that during an emergency, the last thing you want is to wait longer than needed to be seen by a healthcare professional. While national average emergency room (ER) wait times have doubled over the past decade, the average wait time to see an ER physician at Medical Center Enterprise (MCE) continues to decrease; it's now under an hour, which is below the national average and lower than local area hospitals. Patients are being seen within 10 minutes or less by a triage nurse.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

The triage nurse will take vital signs, ask about your symptoms and gather family and past medical history. This facilitates patient assessment and allows the nurse to prioritize patients awaiting care based on the seriousness of their problem, so those needing immediate medical attention are given top priority, regardless of their arrival time.

The ER physician evaluates the patient and orders any necessary tests and treatment, including lab work, X-rays, intravenous therapy fluids and medications. After reviewing the results, a diagnosis is made and discussed with the patient and family member or caregiver.

If hospitalization isn't needed, the patient is given a discharge plan, which includes information about diagnosis, medication and physician follow-up.

A recent study showed that more than 90 percent of all patients seen at MCE's ER were satisfied with their care.

"Advanced medical care with the hometown touch is the best way for me to describe my experience at Medical Center Enterprise," says long-time Enterprise resident Michelle Mann. "When I had occasion to need emergency medical service, comprehensive service delivered by compassionate professionals was minutes away from my home. I'm so grateful that we have the outstanding services of Medical Center Enterprise right in our own hometown. It's truly a big-town medical center with a small-town heart!"

"Providing comprehensive and timely care with compassion is a responsibility we take very seriously," says Jeffrey Brannon, chief executive officer at MCE. "I'm thankful for our dedicated and caring staff and appreciative of the trust placed in us by those in our community."



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To learn more about services at Medical Center Enterprise, visit www.mcehospital.com.