

CHECK *up*

Kimball News For Our Community



MARCH SPRINGS AHEAD TO HAY FEVER SEASON

March is the month many pollens start to range in the high levels and allergy sufferers tend to suffer the consequences.

Seasonal allergic rhinitis, also known as hay fever, is most often triggered by the pollen of trees, grasses and weeds. Tree pollen emerges in early spring, grass pollen in late spring to early summer, and weed pollen throughout the spring and summer.

For those who find themselves running for tissues and rubbing itchy, watery eyes, Kimball Medical Center ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist Suresh C. Giri, M.D., notes that relief is available. Dr. Giri, who estimates that 70 percent of his patients suffer from seasonal allergies, points to the following steps to avoid and manage allergic rhinitis:

- **Avoidance** – During the peak of pollen season, stay away from the offending allergens. Keep the windows closed, use air conditioning in the car and home, and stay indoors as much as possible. Also High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) and electrostatic filters are very effective in culling pollen from the air indoors.
- **Medication** – Over-the-counter and prescription antihistamines, decongestants, and nasal sprays are available. Your doctor may be able to prescribe a combination of over-the-counter and prescription medications tailored to your specific needs.
- **Allergy Shots** – People with severe allergies may need immunotherapy in addition to medication to get relief. It helps reduce the body's sensitivity to almost any airborne allergen.

“Allergies are rarely cured, but there are many medications, supplements and treatment options that are available to help relieve allergy symptoms, both over-the-counter and by prescription,” says Dr. Giri, who is board certified by the American Academy of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery and who trained as an ENT at the State University of New York Health Science

Center at Brooklyn and in pediatrics at Mount Sinai Medical Center, New York. “The secret for allergy sufferers is finding the right medication or treatment that works best to relieve the specific symptoms they are experiencing.”

For a referral to a Kimball allergy specialist, call the Health Care Link at **1-888-SBHS-123**.



MENACING POLLENS

The primary menacing tree pollens include alder, ash, beech, birch, box elder, cottonwood, cypress, elm, hickory, juniper, maple, mountain cedar, oak, pecan, poplar, sycamore, western red cedar and walnut. Although pine and citrus trees are heavy pollen producers they rarely cause allergic reactions because their pollen is too large and heavy.

Timothy grass, Kentucky bluegrass, Johnson grass, Bermuda grass, redtop grass, orchard grass and sweet vernal grass are the primary grasses whose pollen creates havoc for the allergy sufferer.

Although ragweed is considered the most allergenic weed, others that are also offenders include sagebrush, redroot pigweed, lamb's quarters, Russian thistle (tumble weed) and English plantain.

Source: National Institutes of Health.

Uncontrolled allergies can put a child at risk for getting a secondary sinus infection, ear infections and for having poor concentration at school. To learn more about children and allergies, see page 4.

Dear Neighbor:



In this issue of *Checkup*, we take a look at an innovative program that created a partnership to bring together the best that the public and private sectors have to offer. In 2004, the Kimball Medical Center Foundation received funding from the non-profit organization New Jersey After 3 to pilot a program at the Holman Elementary School in Jackson.

The program is based on a very successful existing New York model called **The Afterschool Corporation** that has a proven track record of success. It is a model that pairs non-profit organizations such as Kimball with schools to bring together different skill sets and expertise from both institutions.

New Jersey After 3 funding is expressly targeted to creating a specific vision of afterschool program that delivers high-quality activities and continually expands resources for activities. Since its debut in Jackson, Kimball has expanded the New Jersey After 3 program to the Ella G. Clarke School in Lakewood, and is now reaching more than 500 school children in Ocean County.

Also in this issue we highlight Corporate Care, Kimball Medical Center's innovative Workers' Compensation and Preventive Health Program that offers comprehensive on-site services such as well-care education and monitoring, as well as post-injury assistance and follow-up.

Investing in the wellness of their work force — any company's greatest asset — is a wise investment, because keeping employees healthy is the key to preventive care and promoting a safe and productive work environment. Hundreds of area employers — large and small companies, as well as governmental agencies on the local, state and federal level — have chosen Corporate Care to keep their employees healthy and productive.

It is our goal at Kimball Medical Center to be a leader in designing new ways of delivering services by forming innovative and collaborative relationships with others. By working with the New Jersey After 3 program and with the host of companies we've partnered with over the last 15 years through Corporate Care, we are meeting this goal.

As a community hospital, Kimball Medical Center belongs to the surrounding community and its people, and as executive director, I believe it's up to us to make our neighbors feel that way. Through these and many other innovative partnerships, I feel we are succeeding.

Joe Hicks

Joe Hicks
Executive Director

Kimball Partners with Local Schools for Program Focusing on 'Well-Rounded Knowledge'

Jackson resident Valerie Witaker-Poku has experienced the power of academic afterschool programs from both sides of the teacher's desk.

For Witaker-Poku, the introduction of the New Jersey After 3 program at Jackson's Holman Elementary School has allowed her to partner with Kimball Medical Center to lead enriching afterschool activities at the school where she herself was a student in an aftercare program. Dedicated to expanding afterschool opportunities for New Jersey's elementary and middle school students, the program's stated vision is to provide children with the opportunity to participate in high-quality, comprehensive, structured, supervised and enriching afterschool activities.

Witaker-Poku, the New Jersey After 3 site coordinator at the Holman School who is responsible for building the hospital-school relationship, staffing the program and planning daily activities, says the program provides an opportunity to work with the teachers to continue the academic day by focusing on "well-rounded knowledge" that carries on throughout the afternoon. Noting that she has worked with the Jackson Child Care Academy since she was 14, she says the program features "project-based learning."

"For example, Friday is Culture Day, which is geared to helping students understand the world around them," she says. "On Wednesday we have Science Day, where we've featured community health education

programs from Kimball, including a recent tobacco prevention program."

The goal of New Jersey After 3 — a private, non-profit organization — is to serve more than 13,000 children in grades kindergarten through eight during the 2006/07 school year. The program is offered each school day from 3 to 6 p.m.

The schools provide the buildings/facilities, as well as access to teachers and professional educators, while providing a direct link to the school day. This reduces the cost to taxpayers by using an existing facility, minimizing transportation costs and limiting liability costs. Non-profit organizations such as Kimball bring the ability to run programs and to encourage and involve the community.

Since debuting at the Holman Elementary School in Jackson, Kimball Medical Center Foundation has expanded the program to the Ella G. Clarke School in Lakewood. Kimball leads the only New Jersey After 3 program in Ocean and Monmouth counties and reaches more than 500 children each school day.

"As our community has grown, so have we in countless ways to meet their needs today and prepare for the challenges of tomorrow," says Teri Lacey, director of development for Kimball Medical Center. "Investing in the children of our community is investing in the future of our community. Kimball is so proud to partner with our neighborhood schools for this important program."



Valerie Witaker-Poku, the New Jersey After 3 site coordinator at Jackson's Holman Elementary School, leads circle time with, clockwise from right, Lauren Pousson, Lawrence Santangelo, Christopher Murphy, Christopher Stefanowicz and D.J. Elliott, third-graders at the Manhattan Street school.

KIMBALL SPORTS MEDICINE EXPERTS RESTORE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR AN ACTIVE NURSE

Lisa Mayers, a nurse who works 12-hour days, had lived all her life with a tilted kneecap — a problem that didn't interfere with her active lifestyle until an injury last summer left her with constant pain.

"I was trying to work out in the gym on the elliptical equipment, which is non-impact, but it was too painful, and then I found that I couldn't walk on the beach, because it hurt to walk in the sand," says the 41-year-old Forked River resident. "It was really affecting my quality of life."

Noting that she was starting to suffer from hip pain as well as a result of favoring her injured knee, she decided to turn to Kimball Medical Center for help.

"My tilted kneecap was something I always had, but I wanted to make sure that I hadn't torn something," she says.

Kimball Medical Center orthopedic surgeon Andrew Harrison, M.D., diagnosed patellofemoral syndrome — a condition of pain in the front of the knee that can be caused by overuse, injury, excess weight, or, as in Mayers' case, a kneecap that is not properly aligned (lateral patella tilt).

Normally, as the knee bends, the patella, or kneecap, slides smoothly along a groove in the thigh bone. But under certain conditions, Dr. Harrison explains, the patella may experience forces that push it against the sides of the groove, causing pain.

"For some people, surgery can relieve pain and slow the progression of the condition," he says. "If the problem is clearly caused by excessive lateral tracking, a procedure

known as a lateral release can relieve undue stress on the cartilage surface of the patella by correctly realigning a tilted kneecap."

Dr. Harrison performed a lateral retinacular release on Mayers' injured kneecap on November 2, and after a couple of weeks of rest, he referred her to Kimball Medical Center's new Institute for Rehabilitative and Occupational Health Services — the state-of-the-art outpatient facility that opened on Kimball's Lakewood campus last fall. The Hospital's expansion into the outpatient rehabilitative arena represents a continuum of care that crosses a multitude of specialties that in addition to sports medicine includes post-stroke care, pediatric rehabilitation and speech and language therapies.

Restoring one's ability to achieve his or her daily life routines is the sole focus of each of the facility's team members, according to Dr. Harrison, medical director for the institute. "Whether the goal of therapy is to speak clearly again, walk unassisted, or run

a marathon, a rehabilitative program is designed with the individual in mind," he says.

For Mayers, that program has included three sessions a week of therapeutic exercise, stretching, mobilization, neuromuscular re-education, electrical stimulation, isokinetic strengthening and cold packs — a regimen that has restored the function in her right knee and helped her resume her normal activities of daily living — and her quality of life.

"Before the surgery, I was in constant pain, but now, with the procedure that Dr. Harrison performed and the individualized physical therapy plan, I can see a big difference in my range of motion, and the pain I had before is gone," she says.

For more information on the Kimball Institute for Rehabilitative and Occupational Health, or for a referral to a Kimball Medical Center sports medicine specialist, call the Saint Barnabas Health Care Link at **1-888-SBHS-123**.



Lisa Mayers turned to the sports medicine experts at Kimball Medical Center when pain in her right knee became debilitating. She is shown here in Kimball's Institute for Rehabilitative and Occupational Health Services — the state-of-the-art outpatient facility that recently opened on Kimball's Lakewood campus — with Kimball physical therapist Laurie Ferraro.

WELLNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Kimball Medical Center Offers Everything Needed to Keep Employees Healthy On and Off the Job

Corporate Care, Kimball Medical Center's innovative Workers' Compensation and Preventive Health Program, offers comprehensive on-site services that include well-care education and monitoring as well as post-injury assistance and follow-up.

"Corporate Care starts at the very beginning of the employment process by offering post-offer, pre-employment functionality ability screenings that help guarantee an individual's suitability to perform required job duties," explains board-certified internist John Minetti, M.D., the program's medical director. "Functional ability screenings greatly improve a company's chances of avoiding potential injuries that can occur when a new employee cannot physically perform the job for which he was hired."

And as the employee is welcomed to the company, Corporate Care continues to provide annual physicals and screenings for a host of medical conditions, Dr. Minetti adds. Random drug and alcohol testing at either Kimball's

Corporate Care location — conveniently located at Kimball's new Institute for Rehabilitative and Occupational Health Services near the hospital campus — or at the workplace can be included in the program, as well as vaccinations required in the United States or those necessary for international travel.

"And Corporate Care also offers on-site injury prevention services, like ergonomic work-site analysis, ergonomic job-task analysis, and repetitive motion injury and 'comfort at your computer' classes," Dr. Minetti says.

Noting that the professionals in Kimball's Corporate Care division believe that preventing injuries is far better than treating them, he says they also realize that on-the-job injuries do occur. He points to Corporate Care office hours — 7:30 a.m. through 4 p.m. — and notes that life-threatening conditions and after-hours injuries are treated in Kimball Medical Center's Emergency Department.

"The program provides on-site laboratory services, referrals to specialists as required, physical and occupational therapy, professional case management and tracking and trending of injuries," he says, adding that, for those hurt on the job, physical therapy can begin within 24 hours of an injury.

Through the Corporate Care Program, Kimball's Speakers' Bureau can bring an extensive range of health care programs to the business or work site. Smoking cessation and stress management seminars, exercise and diabetes education are among the health topics presented by Kimball's highly trained professionals.

"For more than 15 years, Corporate Care has been the choice of nearly 400 area employers, keeping their employees healthy and productive," Dr. Minetti says.

"Corporate Care provides comprehensive care — always keeping in mind the concerns of every employee."

For additional information about the services provided by Corporate Care at Kimball Medical Center, call the Saint Barnabas Health Care Link at 1-888-SBHS-123.

SPRING TIME AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Like adults, infants and children commonly suffer from hay fever symptoms including a stuffy or runny nose with clear drainage, sneezing, itchy eyes and nose, sore throat, throat clearing and a cough that may be worse at night and in the morning.

Other signs of having allergic rhinitis include the "allergic salute," a common habit of children that consists of rubbing their nose upward. This is usually because the nose is itchy and this practice can lead to a small crease in the skin of the lower part of the nose, according to Kimball Medical Center ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist Suresh C. Giri, M.D.

"Children with allergic rhinitis also commonly have 'allergic shiners,' which are dark circles under the eyes caused by nasal congestion," says Dr. Giri, who also trained in pediatrics at New York's Mount Sinai Medical Center. "Allergic rhinitis does run in certain families and are more common in children who have asthma or eczema. It is also more common in children who are exposed to secondhand smoke, air pollution and pets."

He notes that having uncontrolled allergies can put a child at risk for getting a secondary sinus infection, ear infections and

for having poor concentration at school, and that it can also make asthma symptoms worse.

"The best treatment for allergic rhinitis is to avoid what your child is allergic to by following prevention and environmental controls," he says. For seasonal allergies, this includes keeping windows closed in the car and at home to avoid exposure to pollens and limit outdoor activities when pollen counts are highest (early morning for tree pollen in the spring, afternoon and early evening for grasses in the summer, and midday for ragweed in the fall).

Dr. Giri points to a host of over-the-counter medications that are used to control mild symptoms of allergic rhinitis, and suggests parents consult their child's pediatrician for recommendations.

"Your child may also benefit from nasal irrigations using saline nose drops one to three times a day," he adds. "This will help the sinuses drain. If your child does not improve with these interventions, then we will consider having him see an allergy specialist for skin testing to figure out what he is allergic to and to possibly start immunotherapy injections (allergy shots)."

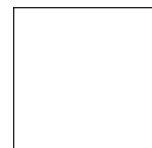


SURESH C. GIRI, M.D.

Kimball Medical Center ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist Suresh C. Giri, M.D., also trained in pediatrics. Dr. Giri, who is shown here in his Lakewood office, estimates that 70 percent of his patients — adults and children — suffer from seasonal allergies.



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Just minutes from home.