Seasonal Allergies

WHAT IS IT?
Allergies occur when your body reacts to a foreign substance. As a part of your immune system response, antibodies are made, which normally helps protect you from illness or infection. However with allergies, your immune system mistakes a substance as harmful, even though it is not. This reaction triggers an inflammatory response on the skin, sinuses or airway.

PREVENTION
- Monitor pollen and mold counts. (www.pollen.com)
- Keep windows and doors shut at home and in your car during allergy season.
- Stay inside midday and during the afternoon, when pollen counts are highest.
- Take a shower, wash your hair and change your clothes after you’ve been working or playing outdoors.

SYMPTOMS
- Runny nose and nasal congestion
- Watery, itchy, red eyes (allergic conjunctivitis)
- Sneezing
- Cough
- Itchy nose, roof of mouth or throat
- Swollen, blue-colored skin under the eyes (allergic shiners)
- Postnasal drip
- Fatigue

RISK FACTORS
- Having other allergies or asthma
- Having atopic dermatitis (eczema)
- Having a blood relative (such as a parent or sibling) with allergies or asthma
- Living or working in an environment that constantly exposes you to allergens —

SELF CARE
- Avoid allergen; pollen counts are often highest in the morning.
- Try over-the-counter medication: CAUTION: Always follow package instructions.
  - Fluticasone propionate (Flonase): helps with nasal inflammation, itchiness and runny nose.
  - Antihistamines: Examples include Loratadine (Claritin) and Cetirizine (Zyrtec). They help with itching, sneezing and runny nose by blocking histamine, which is a chemical in the body that causes inflammation and allergic reactions. May cause drowsiness.
  - Decongestants: pseudoephedrine (Sudafed). Note: can increase blood pressure, cause insomnia or headache.

The information presented here is not intended to be used for the diagnosis of a health problem or as a substitute for consulting a licensed medical professional. When using an Over-the-Counter medication please be sure to follow the package instructions. Contact Health Services if you have any additional questions, concerns or to make an appointment.

The Wellness Center at University Crossing
978-934-6800
http://www.uml.edu/student-services/Wellness-Center