

It's that time of year *Seasonal allergies and their symptoms*

It's allergy season—what so many of us know as a dreaded time of year when we gravitate toward the local pharmacy in search of relief for running noses and itchy eyes. Seasonal Allergies begin when the temperature changes enough to begin the cycle of pollen production in plants and trees. Tree pollination is the first stage of allergy season and can begin as early as January the further south you live. Next, weed-like grasses cause grass pollen allergies which usually begins anywhere between early April and late June. By late summer, the ragweed pollen takes over our allergies, and we can only hope that frost will finally put an end to allergy trouble until next spring.

Some symptoms of seasonal allergies may include:

- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Sore & itchy throat
- Itchy & Watery eyes
- Wheezing
- Coughing
- Fatigue
- Headaches

Allergies can also cause sinus and ear problems. If you tend to have many of these symptoms from year to year, lasting longer than a week at a time, you most likely suffer from seasonal allergies. Not to worry, you are definitely not alone, and there are several ways to help.

A simple matter of avoidance is your first line of defense. For example, keep your house and car windows closed, and wash your hair, skin and pets after being outdoors to keep pollen out of your system as much as possible.

When these tips fail to work, it is time to see an allergy specialist. Dr. Bethany Gibson of ENTA is a certified allergist and immunologist. Dr. Gibson can test you for the allergies you are most susceptible to and give you the best course of action for treatment and prevention.

To learn more about allergies contact ENTA Allergy, Head & Neck Institute today 876-3682.



Dr. Bethany Gibson
 Allergist

Now accepting appointments for the treatment of allergies.

Our Mission

- ◆ To provide the best care for our patients in a compassionate and caring environment.
- ◆ To work to advance the art, science and ethical practice of Otolaryngology, Head & Neck Surgery.
- ◆ To provide the most contemporary medical and surgical approaches to treating disorders of the ears, nose, throat and related structures of the head and neck.
- ◆ To integrate our efforts with those of primary care physicians and other specialists to optimize patient outcomes.

Tubing in the summer *Ear tubes and the summer season*

By the age of 5, most children have experienced an ear infection. While this is a normal occurrence for all children, sometimes ear infections become a chronic problem that can lead to other issues such as hearing loss, behavioral disorders, or speech impediments.

To avoid these potential outcomes, inserting ear tubes has become quite commonplace and is often a recommendation physicians make for children suffering from chronic ear infections.

An ear infection is simply fluid in the middle ear, forcing pressure on the ear drum. To alleviate this pressure, ear tubes are inserted that



A small incision is made in the tympanic membrane.

Tube inserted to drain fluid

allow a small vent for fluid to escape. To avoid the possibility of bacteria entering the middle ear through the ventilation tube, physicians may recommend keeping ears dry by using ear plugs or other water-tight devices during bathing, swimming, and water activities.

Although earplugs have been the rule of thumb, recent research suggests that protecting the ear may not be necessary, except when diving or engaging in water activities in unclean water such as lakes and rivers. To best prevent infection, parents should consult with the treating physician about ear protection after surgery.

New Treatments for Seizures and Depression

Exploring Vagus Nerve Stimulation

In 1997, Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS) became available in the United States. This is a procedure that has become key in treating epileptic patients, and is now the only FDA approved long-term treatment option for depression.

What is Vagus Nerve Stimulation?

The vagus nerve is one of twelve pairs of cranial nerves that are direct extensions of the brain, and is associated with motor function in the larynx, diaphragm, stomach and heart; sensory function in the ears and tongue; motor and sensory function in the sinuses and esophagus; and regulates sleep and mood. Stimulation of the vagus nerve is thought to affect the connections in the brain that are susceptible to epileptic seizure activity, therefore reducing seizures in epileptic patients, as well as stimulating mood for patients suffering from treatment-resistant depression.

The Procedure

The procedure of vagus nerve stimulation for those suffering from epilepsy and those suffering from depression is the same. It involves inserting a small generator into the left chest wall of the patient. After the generator is inserted, a connection to the vagus nerve located in the left side of the neck is made subcutaneously. The generator is then programmed to stimulate the vagus nerves at intervals. Previously, VNS was primarily a pro-



cedure performed by neurosurgeons, but today many ear, nose and throat specialists are performing the surgery.

The Results

Patients being treated with VNS are generally epileptics who have not responded to anticonvulsant medications, or have been recommended for surgery, or depressed patients who have been unresponsive to other forms of depression treatments. Prior to the introduction of VNS, the only other option to epileptics besides medication was an invasive brain surgery. VNS offers those suffering from epilepsy a variety of options to help ease the burden of seizures, and offers those suffering from depression improvement in mood and quality of life.

To learn more about Vagus Nerve Stimulation, contact ENTA Allergy, Head & Neck Institute today.

Our Physicians



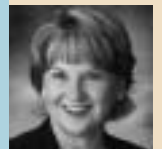
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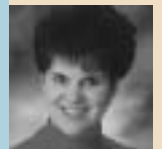
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