

THE ALLERGY & ASTHMA CLINIC

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NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2011

When is it Absenteeism or when do you call it Presenteeism

the simple definition:
"At Work - But Out of It!"
*Studies show when the pollen
count goes up, productivity goes
down.*

You know the feeling; it starts with a telltale snuffle, itchy eyes and an occasional cough. You think you're getting a cold, but the cold never comes while the runny nose never seems to leave. Staying home from work may cost you your job but while at work you just can't seem to focus due to annoying allergy symptoms. Untreated allergies frequently undermine your performance at work.

According to the Harvard Business Review, studies have shown that allergies are the main culprit of Presenteeism in the workforce and represents 59.8% of the cases when compared to other conditions that can also cause a reduction of overall productivity.

As part of a study of how allergies affect a company's workforce, employees were offered a consultation with an allergy specialist. One of the employees in this study decided to get a complete evaluation from the allergist, who ultimately determined that the employee was not only allergic to seasonal ragweed pollen as she had originally thought, but she was also allergic to dust mites, which was why her symptoms persisted throughout the year. The doctor prescribed a combination of drugs and started her on immunotherapy treatments that significantly improved her condition. Although she still has some problems during peak hay fever season, most of the time she feels pretty good and has stated "I'm definitely a lot more alert and able to concentrate better". She estimated that her productivity may have suffered as much as 25% before she was correctly diagnosed and treated.

Seasonal allergic rhinitis, colloquially known as hay fever, is generally considered by researchers to be a serious cause of Presenteeism. Seasonal allergies have a large impact on a workforce's productivity not only because they can severely impair any one individual's performance but because they are so prevalent that they can impact much of the workforce. Although estimates vary, allergies are thought to affect roughly 25% of

the U.S. population, especially during the spring and fall pollen season.

The negative impact of allergy symptoms - itchy nose, sneezing, congestion - on employees' performance has been documented in a variety of studies. One study showed that during peak pollen season the allergy sufferers' productivity fell significantly below the productivity of coworkers without allergies; when pollen wasn't posing a problem, the two group productivity levels were about the same. This study shows that people don't have to be out sick for their work output to drop. Just having a constantly runny nose can have an effect on productivity and it is a problem that, unfortunately, most people don't think about.

Things you can do to help you enjoy a productive year:

Eliminate Allergens:

1. Keep your pet away from carpeted rooms, sleeping areas, upholstered furniture and other places where it becomes difficult or impossible to remove dander.
2. If dust mites are a problem, remove drapes, and other dust gathering items and treat upholstered furniture and carpeting. Wash linens and dust with a moist cloth frequently.
3. Keep windows closed during the peak allergy season, especially on windy days.

Consider Immunotherapy:

With the cost of prescription medications getting higher and higher, many patients find that immunotherapy not only works better for them, but also saves them money. These savings are even more pronounced when you factor in the cost of lost work and decreased productivity (Presenteeism) many allergy sufferers experience.

With immunotherapy, the patient receives a vaccination containing a small amount of allergen. This prompts the body to make natural antibodies, which gradually increase one's immunity to the culprit. It is the only therapy that doesn't just treat allergy symptoms but gets at the cause and is the closest thing we have to a cure for the misery and inconvenience of allergies. Most people also feel that it makes them more alert and productive, as well as less likely to get sick.

In addition to treating the original allergy, patients successfully treated with immunotherapy are less likely to develop new allergies and are also less likely to develop

many of the serious secondary complications, such as asthma, sinusitis and ear infections, commonly associated with allergies.

Successfully Using Medicines:

Dr. Engler wishes to stress that medications also have their role in relieving the symptoms of allergy. Even though they do not cure the patient, when properly prescribed and utilized, allergy and asthma medication can do wonders in helping many patients feel better and more fully enjoy their lives. When pollen counts are high, it is important that you have a clear cut game plan on how you are going to handle your allergies - both with regard to doing your best to prevent allergy symptoms from flaring up in the first place and in getting the relief you need if your symptoms break through and leave you feeling under the weather.

Fortunately, we have a number of treatment options available that are very effective at both preventing and relieving allergy and asthma symptoms, but in general, these treatments work best when used in advance. So start thinking about preparing for spring season.

If you are concerned that you, a loved one or one of your co-workers suffers from Presenteeism, please don't suffer in silence--contact us so we can review your treatment options and help you feel your best and continue to be productive. We will go over what treatment will most likely work best for you, discuss possible side effects and help you make the best possible decision for you and your family or your friends and co-workers!

Dr. Engler Wins Patient's Choice Award For 2010

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our patients for once again selecting Dr. Engler for the Patient's Choice award!! This prestigious award is considered the honor roll of America's favorite doctors, as selected by their patients, and is given to doctors who have received the highest ratings from the patients they treat. For more information about the selection process or to find other physicians who have been honored, please visit the website www.Vitals.com. Dr. Engler is honored to receive this award and is thankful to his patients for their trust and confidence.

Change in Office Hours:

In honor of President's Day our office will be closed on Monday, February 21, 2011