

TODAY'S FOCUS

Be reasonable and cautious when dealing with spring allergies

By PAGE PATTIE

Special to GwinnettForum.com

SNELLVILLE, Ga., May 7, 2010 -- While spring is a beautiful time of year, it can also be miserable and frustrating for allergy sufferers. Allergies affect as many as 60 million Americans, or one in every five adults and children.

Spring pollens are a common cause of allergies that result in respiratory symptoms. The most common allergic responses are breathing problems like congestion, sneezing and wheezing, along with itchy eyes and skin irritation, redness, hives or itch. If you suffer from allergies, you may have only one of these symptoms or several.



The first course of treatment is avoiding the allergen. Unfortunately, short of staying indoors when pollen counts are high--and even that may not help--there's no easy way to evade windborne pollen.

Tina A. Thompson, M.D., is a family practitioner with Rockbridge Family Practice and is on the medical staff at Emory Eastside Medical Center. She says: "if it is necessary for you to be outside, choose a day after rain

has fallen and take a shower as soon as you can to rinse off the pollen."

Your physician may also prescribe medications, recommend over-the-counter remedies, or suggest allergy shots. Although there is no cure for allergies, one of these strategies or a combination of them can provide varying degrees of relief from allergy symptoms.

Antihistamines counter the effects of histamine that is released in response to the allergen. Antihistamines relieve sneezing and itching in the nose, throat, and eyes; reduce nasal swelling and drainage; and are used to treat hives.

Some antihistamines can cause drowsiness and increase risk of vehicle and occupational injuries. But there are now newer medications that have fewer side effects.

Use caution when choosing over-the-counter medications to treat allergy symptoms, particularly if you are taking other prescription medications or herbal remedies. Your physician can help you make choices that will avoid dangerous drug interactions.

Also, if you are pregnant, keep in mind that some of these antihistamines' effects on an unborn baby are untested; similarly, their effects on breast milk or nursing infants are in some cases not known. Always tell your physician if you are, could be, or could become pregnant, and discuss your situation with your doctor before taking any medications.

EEB PERSPECTIVE

Nice, welcoming look to 5 interchanges along I-85 in Gwinnett

By ELLIOTT BRACK
Editor and publisher

MAY 7, 2010 -- The late John Mattox was a family friend, Southern gentleman and attorney. He once told us that you could tell a lot about a community by simply observing how well it kept up its court house and graveyards.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Here's one way to tell how strong a woman can be

"A woman is like a tea bag -- you never know how strong she is until she gets in hot water."

-- Former First Lady
Eleanor Roosevelt,
(1884-1962).

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Brack

We'll add another element: how communities located along interstate highways keep up the exits. Are they littered with everything from beer bottles and cigarette butts to old mattresses and washers? Or are they pristine and obviously cared for by the community?

Along Interstate 85 in Gwinnett, from Jimmy Carter Boulevard to Pleasant Hill Road, are what we feel are the nicest ramp beautification projects in the nation. It's no

happens, as they are projects funded by the two Community Improvement Districts, the Gwinnett Village and Gwinnett Place CIDs.

Such projects take time, good planning and proper funding. The two CIDs provide the majority of the upkeep funding, with monies also coming from the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Gwinnett Place CID maintains eight quadrants on I-85 at Pleasant Hill Road and Steve Reynolds Boulevard, and originally spent \$657,145 on the beautification. The weekly maintenance costs \$40,000 annually.

Gwinnett Village CID spent \$800,000 on the interchanges at Jimmy Carter boulevard, Indian Trail Road and Beaver Ruin Road.

Chuck Warbington, executive director of the Gwinnett Village CID, feels the exits "are our signature project. It's a re-branding, showing that people here care about their area. It's part of the county that was once written-off, but now is well-maintained, thriving and welcoming."

Both CIDs also maintain pristine upkeep of roads within their boundaries. Gwinnett Place CID keeps up 10 miles of roadway within its borders with weekly service, while Gwinnett Village CID has ongoing road maintenance on Beaver Ruin Road from Norcross to I-85, Buford Highway from Norcross to the DeKalb border, on Jimmy Carter Boulevard; on Indian Trail Road; Mitchell Road; and portions of Oakbrook and Live Oak Parkways. Gwinnett Village CID's total cost for the interchanges and another 30 miles of roadway within the district, is \$135,000 annually.



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Joe Allen of Gwinnett Place CID says that "...people like to go to an area that looks nice, and is kept up. They feel safer there, so it's also an economic development issue. People comment when they come into the county and note these five intersections on I-85 have their act together and people are willing to make the investments to make their area look good."

All anyone has to do is look at some other parts of the county, where later on, if not now, they will see weeds growing tall with medians uncut, trash abounding, and a general lack of care.

A key to keeping the interstate exits in good shape is preparing the soil adequately, Warbington says, and selecting drought tolerate shrubs and plants. "That soil along I-85 was red,

hard clay. We put our effort in preparing the soil well, adding materials to greatly improve it. After all, we could not run water lines there. Some thought the plants would die, but with good preparation and select plants, the exits are thriving and neat."

A BIG ATTABOY, to these two Community Improvement Districts for having such great entrances to their areas. John Mattox would approve.

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FEEDBACK

Finds beautification work on Interstates subtle, positive change

Editor, the Forum:

I totally agree and salute you for highlighting this positive community statement concerning the beautification of interstate exits in Gwinnett! I point this out to people on a regular basis. It amazes me how this improvement makes such a subtle positive statement, but it frustrates me how many local people have not even taken notice. I must have brought this beautification effort to the attention of several hundred people and am surprised to find that most had no idea who was responsible nor could they even remember how bad it once looked! We certainly live in a world of apathy.

I commend the two CID's and their respective leadership for doing a job far beyond anything I would have ever dreamed possible when I first heard of the CID concept. While this beautification effort is certainly a very visible part of their efforts, it is certainly only a part of their achievements. Way to go guys! Please keep up the good work.

-- David H. Freeman, Buford

The Cement Duck hit the spot with this northeast Georgia native

Editor, the Forum:

Thank you so much for calling my attention the book by Alma Bowen called *The Cement Duck*. Having spent a portion of my youth in the very county in Northeast Georgia that Mrs. Bowen is writing about, I was particularly drawn to the subject matter. I was certainly not disappointed.

I found the book to be a delightful read for several reasons. The storyline was paced well and certainly held my interest. The characters seemed so believable and representative of the area. And throughout the book, Mrs. Bowen scattered little treasured jewels of area history. Hopefully the author is fast at work on another book that I be watching for.

-- Harriet Cole, Lawrenceville

We encourage readers to submit feedback or letters to the editor. Send your thoughts to editor at elliott@brack.net. We