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Hidden recorder leads to arrest of Forestbrook Elementary School special

Tree pollen at root of most allergies, for now

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It may seem like the allergy assault this spring is much worse than usual, but it's really about average – not that the news makes anyone feel any better.

“It's not worse than last year,” said Dr. Mark Schecker, an allergist with Coastal Carolina Allergy and Asthma Associates in Myrtle Beach. “It's primarily tree pollen season - oak, elm, maple, birch - they tend to be the prominent offenders this time of year.”

Schecker said while it's not always easy to tell the difference between an allergy and a cold, in general, allergies last longer, with itching, lots of sneezing fits and clearer, thinner secretions. If the condition is hanging on more than seven days and if there is a recurrent pattern, it is more likely to be an allergy, he said.

The major point, he said, is that the earlier an allergy is recognized and treated, the less of a problem it will be. Left untreated, he said, they can lead to bigger problems that are harder to deal with, such as asthma and chronic sinus infections.

For some who are new to the area, allergies seem to be a new development. Schecker said the longer springs and warmer seasons here might trigger low-level allergies that might not be as problematic in other places, such as up north, but they become much more obvious here. He said he began seeing allergy cases this year as early as January, and the tree pollen will be around through the early to middle part of this month.

But don't celebrate just yet.

“Grass pollen will take its place,” Schecker said. “We don't get much of a break around here.”

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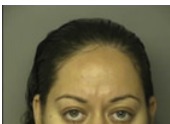
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