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EDUCATION / Friday, June 27, 2014

Broken Arrow Ledger **17**

Oklahoma ranks high in summer allergies

By **John Ferguson**
 News Editor
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Seasonal allergies are nothing to sneeze at. It takes a little bit of scratching to find the best preventative measures to stay on top of it.

No one knows that better than Dr. Michelle O'Meara, DO of the St. John Medical Group in Broken Arrow.

Dr. O'Meara knows what works and what doesn't for those runny noses, itchy eyes or skin irritations.

Here are some of the tips Dr. O'Meara offered.

First, there are 50 million seasonal allergy sufferers. Oklahoma ranks very high in seasonal medicine use.

To keep the pollen level low, Dr. O'Meara suggests not to open windows at home, take off shoes at the door and then shower after being outside to wash away the dust.

Since pollen enter through the eyes, it's a good idea to wear a brimmed hat and some type of glasses when gardening or any outside activity.

A saline solution is good for the nasal cavities and a neti pot is best, but sometimes awkward to use.

"I want you to be proactive and not reactive," said Dr. O'Meara when it comes to seasonal allergies.

Starting weeks ahead of the change in seasons, either spring or fall, use saline solutions for the nose and wash or shower soon after working or playing outside.

Don't forget the hair, either. A clean scalp won't transfer pollen to pillows or bedding.

What is Dr. O'Meara's biggest pet peeve? "Over the counter drugs are a big no-



DR. MICHELLE O'MEARA

no," she said. "Rebound congestion can come."

Dr. O'Meara suggests that treatment should begin "before onset."

"If fall is the problem, then start treatment in late August," Dr. O'Meara said.

The best way to tell the difference between an allergy and an infection? If it's clear drainage then it's an allergy. Anything else is an infection.

When is it time to see a doctor?

"When you've tried over the counter drugs and they are not working well," she said. "If you have a headache, fatigue or low grade fever."

The doctor might try a steroid shot or saline spray to help. If it doesn't, provide relief then it's time for allergy shots, skin tests and blood testing by a specialist.

Rock dancer



SUBMITTED PHOTO

DANCING BALANCE — Dominica Faith Dello Iacona of Broken Arrow was one of 20 ballet dancers selected to attend the Oklahoma Arts Institute at Quartz Mountain in southwest Oklahoma recently. Over 1,000 from across the state auditioned for the entire arts program, but just 270 were selected to attend.



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BOOK DONATION —
The Green Thumb Garden club donates a gardening book to the library every two years when a garden club president goes out of office. On April 16, Sharon Champlin, presented "The Weekend Homesteader" by Anna Hess to librarian Will Thomas.



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