

From his earliest childhood, Dr. Dave Judge, founder of the Allergy, Asthma & Sinus Center in Cary, with offices in North Raleigh and Wake Forest, has been surrounded by people who have influenced his career choice—including a number of memorable patients.

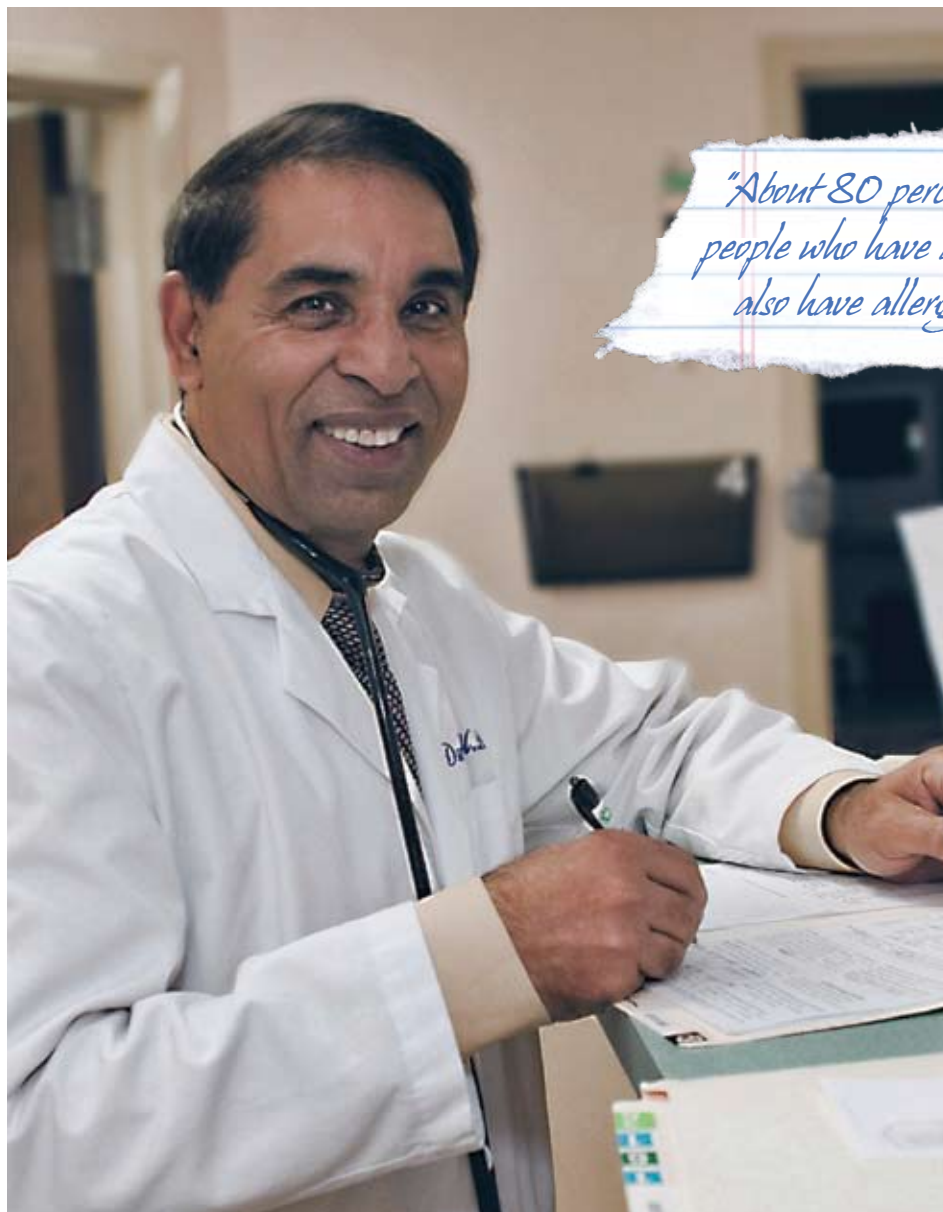
“Allergies and asthma run in my family,” he notes. “My mother had asthma. I’m sure she had allergies, as well—although we never knew that for certain. About 80 percent of people who have asthma also have allergies.

“When I was a youngster in India, no more than five years old, I was aware that my mother was suffering with poor health. I often saw her gasping for air, especially at night when she had trouble breathing, and I reacted to her problems with panic.

“We had a doctor in our village who came to give my mother medicine, and soon—sometimes in a matter of minutes—she would feel much better. I was amazed by all this. I thought he was the best doctor in the whole world. Probably it was this man who first planted the seed in my head that I might some day be a doctor, too, and do what he was doing: making people feel much better. And my mother was clearly ‘a memorable patient.’

“As I grew into my teenage years, it was clear that I had inherited my own set of allergies, as did my brother. We both came to this country after medical school, both of us did advanced training, and both of us specialized in treating allergies, asthma, and sinus conditions.

“My wife and both of our children also have allergies—how could they escape



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Dr. Judge, a board-certified allergist-immunologist and pediatrician.

There are three key elements in Dr. Judge’s treatment plan for people who seek to manage an allergy problem effectively.

“First, of great importance, is *avoidance*,” says Dr. Judge. “A single ragweed plant may release a million pollen grains in one day, and the pollen from the ragweed, grasses, and trees is so small and buoyant that it may float on the wind many miles from its source. Mold spores and other sources of allergy problems are also in the environment with great abundance. Still, it is possible to lessen exposure—especially when you know precisely what the source of the problem is for your individual condition—and the problem may be right in your own yard.”

Dr. Judge encourages people with allergy problems to stay indoors as much as possible during the height of the pollen season and to use high-energy particulate air filters or other devices to help clean pollen and mold from indoor air. Air-conditioning, in the home and in the car, is useful. He also suggests that his allergy patients wear a face mask when mowing the lawn or doing other yard work, among many other strategies and interventions.

“*Medications* are usually the first option for treating allergic conditions,” says Dr. Judge, “when avoidance measures don’t control the problem. Antihistamines and decongestants are the most commonly used medications for allergic rhinitis. Newer medications inhibit the release of chemicals that cause allergic reactions, and help alleviate nasal congestion, runny nose, sneezing, and itching. They are available in many forms, including tablets, nasal sprays, eye drops, and liquids. Side effects from these medications, such as drowsiness, are markedly less of a problem than they were a few years ago, especially with non-sedating antihistamines.”

However, he adds, “one has to be very careful not to get addicted to over-the-counter nasal sprays and to monitor blood pressure when using oral decongestants.”

Another approach to treating allergic reactions is *immunotherapy*, “a safe and effective alternative for patients who do not respond well to other options,” says Dr. Judge. Allergy injections are usually given at variable intervals over a period of two to five years.

“There are many ways of treating allergies,” Dr. Judge finds, “and each person’s treatment must be individualized based on the frequency, severity, and duration of symptoms and on the degree of allergic sensitivity. We encourage our patients to ask questions. When it comes to managing allergies, knowledge really is power.” **h&h**

Choosing a Specialty for Good Reason

them? My daughter is allergic to peanuts and eggs. She had a severe allergic reaction when she was eight months old, when we gave her a small piece of the white part of an egg. Within 20 minutes she had hives all over her body, and turned blue. I raced to my office, about a mile and a half away, and got medicine to her that quickly resolved the problem—much as a doctor had done for my mother many years ago. And so she, too, is on my list of very memorable patients.

“We found out, through allergy testing—which can be done at any age—that my daughter is allergic to peanuts as well as eggs. And of course, she had never eaten a peanut at eight months of age. Possibly my wife ate peanuts during gestation, and perhaps our infant child picked up the allergy condition as the result of nursing.

“My children are now 17 and 13, and their allergies are well-managed. They received allergy injections from the age

of five. This is all very common in our population: one of every five people in this country is allergic to some food or substance, or both.

“Many people experience symptoms year-round—perennial allergic rhinitis—generally caused by sensitivity to house dust, house dust mites, animal danders, and mold spores, as well as food allergies.”

ALLERGIC TO WHAT?

It is a very good idea, and a simple process, to find the cause of an allergic reaction, says Dr. Judge. “The skin testing that we do is the easiest, quickest, most sensitive, and generally least expensive way of making the diagnosis,” he notes. “It’s possible to test for a great array of possible causes of an allergic condition, and to know the results of that testing within minutes.” Less frequently, Dr. Judge will use a special blood test for allergens.

For more information about diagnostic and treatment options for allergies, asthma, and sinus conditions, contact:

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