

## **Patients overreacting to swine flu fears?**

Posted: Oct 06, 2009 12:37 PM EDT Updated: Oct 06, 2009 12:37 PM EDT

By Sunni Blevins

RICHMOND, VA (WWBT) - With all the recent attention to swine flu, doctors are seeing more patients who are concerned that they have the H1N1 virus when they actually have other illnesses.

The Midlothian location of Patient First is seeing a heavy volume of patients right now. Some of the symptoms of flu, allergies and colds do cross over, so it's often tough to figure out which one you have.

We asked the experts to help us break it down.

This fall, doctors are seeing more people concerned they could have swine flu.

In fact, they are seeing very few cases of swine or seasonal flu. So how do you know if you have it?

"They usually have a very fever, severe body aches, pains, headaches and usually a very painful cough--those are the signs of the flu," said Dr. Scott Greenfield, Medical Director at Patient First Midlothian location.

Other common illnesses include fall allergies and colds.

Allergy symptoms include: "Watery eyes, runny nose, maybe a scratchy throat. Your typical allergy type symptoms, certainly we find that a lot this time of year -- the mold counts are high still," he said.

"Something like Benydryl or Claritan or Zirtec, a lot of the over the counter stuff will surface for most patients."

If it's a cold your fighting off: "With that one would get more or less a runny nose as well, a cough, a sort throat, most of the time you are not running a fever with just a regular cold," Dr. Greenfield said.

"Basically decongestions and your typical cold remedies are what you'd use for that."

Doctors say the key to all this is prevention. With allergies, take the appropriate medication. Plus get a flu shot, wash your hands and stay home if you are sick.

*(c) 2009. WWBT, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.*