

What if you can't avoid triggers or your symptoms flare? Make sure to visit your doctor to discuss proper diagnostic evaluation and possible medical treatments.

# Living with seasonal Allergies and Asthma

Written by Board Certified Pulmonologist

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Spring has arrived and with it warmer weather, wind, and more time spent outdoors. The warmer weather and wind result in increased exposure to pollens and molds. For many of us we think nothing of it and look forward to the end of winter and the more pleasant weather and sunlight until the inevitable return of the next winter. However, for those with hay fever and other forms of seasonal allergies, spring can bring a degree of misery.

Seasonal allergies are defined by the presence of allergic symptoms upon exposure to a trigger present only during part of the year. They are usually most notable in the spring and fall. Symptoms include a runny or congested nose, watery and itchy eyes, sneezing

and fatigue. Seasonal allergies are also commonly associated with asthma and other allergic diseases such as eczema (skin rash), chronic sinusitis, and conjunctivitis (pink eye).

Most springtime allergies are caused by pollen from trees. The type of trees most likely to be implicated vary depending upon where you live. Most summertime allergies are caused by grass pollens, and fall allergies by weed pollens. Some weeds also pollinate in the springtime, and some trees in the fall.

Patients that experience symptoms related to seasonal allergies are more likely to have asthma than those without allergies. However, seasonal allergies are not felt to be a cause of asthma, they are

simply associated. In those patients with asthma, seasonal allergies contribute to a significant increase in their symptoms of cough, wheezing and shortness-of-breath. Seasonal allergies may also result in an increased need for asthma medications and doctor visits leading to increased cost.

So, what can you do to prevent yourself from experiencing some of these



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unpleasant symptoms? Avoidance of triggers is the first step in preventing a flare of allergy symptoms and subsequently asthma. Keep windows at your home and workplace closed. Try to avoid long periods of time outdoors during or right after windy days since pollen counts are highest during these times. Take advantage of days after a

rainfall when pollen counts are lowest.

Wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose when outdoors, especially when doing lawn work or gardening.

What if you can't avoid triggers or your symptoms flare? Make sure to visit your doctor to discuss proper diagnostic evaluation and possible

medical treatments. Antihistamines, nasal sprays, inhalers, allergy shots, and many other treatments might be offered to help minimize symptoms and prevent complications related to seasonal allergies.

Spring is here, so don't let your allergies prevent you from enjoying it!