



In Good Health

Your Monthly Wellness Spotlight by PSA

Spring Has Sprung and So Have Allergies!

Spring is here and with it comes all of the beautiful flowers that unleash an abundance of beauty and POLLEN! If you are one of the millions of people with allergies, you are likely experiencing itchy eyes, coughing and sneezing.

About 20% of the world's population has allergic diseases such as asthma, eczema, and hay fever. People often have more than one allergic condition and managing them all can be difficult.

Allergies occur when your immune system overreacts to a foreign substance, such as pollen. Most people do not experience a reaction, but those of us who do suffer.

Your immune system produces antibodies. Antibodies protect you from infections, allergens and toxins. When you have allergies, your body makes antibodies to identify an allergen as harmful, even when it is not. Your response is inflamed skin, itchy eyes, congestion and overall, feeling miserable. The response varies from one person to another. Some allergic responses can be life-threatening, which requires immediate emergency care.

So, How Can You Decrease Your Exposure to Allergies?

To reduce your exposure to allergies, use some of the helpful tips below:

- Stay indoors on dry, windy days. The best time to go outside is after it rains because the rain washes away the pollen in the air.
- When allergies are high, avoid lawn mowing and working in the yard. If you must, wear a mask that will filter out most of the allergens.
- When you come inside, change your clothes and wash them immediately.
- Tumble dry your laundry. Avoid hanging any clothes outside to dry.
- Check your local weather app or news for the pollen count. If the count is high, and you take allergy medication, take it before you go outside.

- Do not sleep with the windows open at night. Be sure to also keep them shut when the pollen count is high.
- Pollen counts are highest in the morning so try putting off activities until later in the afternoon.
- Make sure to change your air conditioner filter on a regular basis
- Vacuum floors often
- When it is humid, use a dehumidifier.

When all else fails, try an over-the counter remedy. These include:

- **Antihistamines** – These can help with sneezing, itching, stuffy nose and watery eyes. They include Zyrtec, Allegra, Claritin and Alavert.
- **Cortisone Nasal Spray** – These sprays help with stuffy noses. They include Flonase, Rhinocort, and Nasacort.
- **Sinus Rinse** – Using saline solution to rinse the allergens out of your sinuses is a quick way to feel relief

The generic form of these drugs is usually cheaper, but just as effective. Make sure to discuss any medication with your doctor before taking it to make sure that it is safe for you.

For many people avoiding allergy triggers and taking over the counter medication helps, but if you are still having a tough time finding relief, reach out to your health care provider. They may recommend you have allergy testing, receive allergy shots, or they may prescribe you with a prescription medication to take.

If you have further questions regarding any health matters, feel free to contact Danielle Herndon, RN, CMM – VP, Health Risk Management, at dherndon@psafinancial.com.

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