Riverwalk Medical Clinic

Advice for Seasonal Allergy Sufferers

*Seasonal allergies are often thought to occur only in spring and summer when tree pollen is released, but seasonal allergies plague allergy sufferers year-round. Outdoor allergens, such as weed pollens and the mold that lingers in fallen leaves, circulate until the first frost in cold climates. Indoor allergens, such as dust mites, pet dander, and mold spores, are present in homes in every season.*

Common symptoms of seasonal allergies include

* Sneezing
* Runny or stuffy nose
* Watery or itchy eyes
* Itchy throat or ear canal
* Ear congestion
* Postnasal drainage

Fortunately, there is a lot you can do to prevent exposure to allergens and nip seasonal allergies in the bud.

Five quick tips for minimizing exposure to outdoor allergens:

1. Work or play outside during the morning or evening hours when the pollen count is lower.
2. Wear a hat and sunglasses to keep pollen off your face and out of your eyes.
3. Wash your hands and face after being outside.
4. Keep your head away from open windows at night when sleeping.
5. Avoid drying sheets, towels, and clothing outside during pollen season.

Five quick tips for minimizing exposure to indoor allergens:

1. Clean your house weekly to reduce the dust that accumulates in your home. Dust mites are tiny microscopic beings that live in dust. Exposure to dust mites can trigger allergy symptoms. Wipe down furniture, vacuum upholstery and carpets, mop floors, vacuum vents, and wash sheets and other bedding in hot water. Also, wash curtains and wipe down window blinds. If possible, use a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
2. Get rid of the places dust mites like to hang out. Bedding, upholstered furniture, and carpeting all collect dust and dust mites. Encase pillows and mattresses in allergy-proof covers that can be removed and washed in hot water. Also, consider reducing the amount of upholstered furniture and carpeting in your home. Wood and tile floors collect less dust than carpeted floors.
3. Use a HEPA air purifier. HEPA air purifiers eliminate 99% of all allergens in your home—not just dust mites. HEPA air purifiers seem costly, but they keep your home allergy-free 365 days a year.
4. Groom pets weekly and keep pets out of bedrooms and off beds. Pet dander, urine, and saliva can all trigger allergy symptoms.
5. Keep mold out of your kitchen, bathroom, and basement. Mold spores thrive in warm, moist environments. Regularly clean kitchens, bathrooms and basements with an antifungal agent, such as a 5% bleach and water solution, and keep mold-prevalent areas well ventilated. Be sure to repair any leaks promptly, and use an exhaust fan, air conditioner, or dehumidifier to dry air and prevent mold from forming.

Prepared by Your Name. More information at www.rwmed.org.