

Seasonal Allergies

WHAT IS IT?

Allergies occur when your body reacts to a foreign substance. As a part of your immune system response, antibodies are made, which normally helps protect you from illness or infection. However with allergies, your immune system mistakes a substance as harmful, even though it is not. This reaction triggers an inflammatory response on the skin, sinuses or airway.

PREVENTION

- Monitor pollen and mold counts. (www.pollen.com)
- Keep windows and doors shut at home and in your car during allergy season.
- Stay inside midday and during the afternoon, when pollen counts are highest.
- Take a shower, wash your hair and change your clothes after you've been working or playing outdoors.

SYMPTOMS

- Runny nose and nasal congestion
- Watery, itchy, red eyes (allergic conjunctivitis)
- Sneezing
- Cough
- Itchy nose, roof of mouth or throat
- Swollen, blue-colored skin under the eyes (allergic shiners)
- Postnasal drip
- Fatigue

RISK FACTORS

- Having other allergies or asthma
- Having atopic dermatitis (eczema)
- Having a blood relative (such as a parent or sibling) with allergies or asthma
- Living or working in an environment that constantly exposes you to allergens —

SELF CARE

- Avoid allergen; pollen counts are often highest in the morning.
- Try over-the-counter medication: CAUTION: Always follow package instructions.
 - Fluticasone propionate (Flonase): helps with nasal inflammation, itchiness and runny nose.
 - Antihistamines: Examples include Loratadine (Claritin) and Cetirizine (Zyrtec). They help with itching, sneezing and runny nose by blocking histamine, which is a chemical in the body that causes inflammation and allergic reactions. May cause drowsiness.
 - Decongestants: pseudoephedrine (Sudafed). Note: can increase blood pressure, cause insomnia or headache.

The information presented here is not intended to be used for the diagnosis of a health problem or as a substitute for consulting a licensed medical professional. When using an Over-the-Counter medication please be sure to follow the package instructions. [Contact Health Services](#) if you have any additional questions, concerns or to make an appointment.