



Spring allergies, also called seasonal allergic rhinitis, affect approximately 39.5 million people in the United States. If you find yourself feeling under the weather around the same time each year, you might be suffering from seasonal allergies. In the spring, allergies are typically triggered by grass and tree pollen.

Symptoms of seasonal allergies

- C Sneezing
- C Congestion
- C Runny nose
- C Scratchy throat
- C Watery eyes
- C Itchy nose, eyes, or ears

Prevention

Fortunately, those who suffer from seasonal allergies don't always have to miss out on outdoor activities. According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology, there are precautions you can take to help prevent an allergic outbreak. Consider the following suggestions.

- C Stay abreast of the pollen count in your area. To view an accurate, local pollen count, visit the National Allergy Bureau online at www.aaaai.org/nab.

- C Don't plan outdoor activities early in the morning. Pollens are generally emitted between 5 and 10 a.m.
- C If you must mow the lawn or rake leaves, wear a filter mask.
- C Take a shower and wash your hair before going to bed every night.
- C Avoid hanging laundry outside to dry.
- C Beware of high mold spore counts in the evening or after a heavy rain.
- C Wash bedding weekly in hot water.
- C Try to use air conditioning rather than opening windows.

Treatment

Although there is no cure for allergies, allergy symptoms can be managed. Frequently, symptoms can be controlled effectively with antihistamines and nasal steroids (nose spray). In some cases, however, it is necessary to consult an allergist to determine whether a series of allergy shots, or allergen immunotherapy, is necessary.

If you suspect that you are suffering from seasonal allergies, consult a physician for diagnosis and treatment options.

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