

Pointers For Parents

Reading, Writing and Rhinitis

(NAPSA)—Up to 40 percent of school-age children suffer from allergic rhinitis, causing them to miss as many as 2 million school days per year.

However, one in four moms reports delaying the treatment of her child's allergy symptoms, often because of the negative side effects that some medications can cause, such as sedation and irritability, according to the 2003 Claritin® Pediatric Allergy Survey.

These findings underscore the dilemma many parents face with their children's allergies: treat them with medications that will make them drowsy and keep them from performing at their best, or let them suffer through their allergy symptoms.

Seasonal allergies in children may be associated with a decreased ability to concentrate, speech or hearing impairment, limitation of activities, sleep disruption, irritability, mood swings, difficulty with peer interaction, family stress, or an increased likelihood of learning and psychosocial problems.

Dana Reeve, mother, actress and wife of actor Christopher Reeve, recalls her conflict over treating her stepson Matthew's severe allergies. "When Matthew was younger, medications made him tired and unable to concentrate, interfering with his normal activities," she explains.

The Reeves' problem was solved when their doctor recommended Claritin, a non-drowsy antihistamine.



"As a mom, I trust Claritin because it's safe, it lasts all day and all night, and it doesn't have the sedating side effects that some other allergy medications can cause," says Reeve. "And now that it's available without a prescription, it's even easier for moms to treat. Children can go to school, play outside and just enjoy being kids without being stopped by their allergies."

School Daze

The pediatric survey revealed that nearly two in five mothers or guardians (38 percent) are unaware that Benadryl (an allergy medication available over the counter) contains the same active ingredient as in some sleep-aid medications.

"It's important to treat children's allergies with a nonsedating medication so they can function at school without being hindered by the drowsiness caused by most allergy medicines," says Dr. Paul Ehrlich, a New York City-based pediatric allergist and co-author of *What Your Doctor May Not Tell*

You About Children's Allergies and Asthma.

"If allergic rhinitis goes untreated, children not only miss school and lose sleep, but often do less well in the classroom. There is also a noticeable association between allergies and ear infections," explains Dr. Ehrlich.

Know Your ABCs

With the right precautions, identifying and treating your child's allergy symptoms can be as easy as A-B-C. Dr. Ehrlich advises that parents and guardians follow these simple steps:

Ask teachers or the school nurse if they've noticed any changes in the child's behavior that may indicate allergies, such as sleepiness in class, irritability, or excessive sneezing and nose rubbing.

Be sure to know the difference between allergies and a cold—if symptoms last longer than a week to 10 days, the child may have allergies.

Choose a convenient and non-drowsy allergy medication to relieve your child's allergy symptoms, so he or she can enjoy time outside on the playground.

Claritin Syrup is the only non-drowsy antihistamine available over the counter that is safe for children ages 2 and older. For children ages 6 and older, once-daily Claritin RediTabs® Tablets dissolve on the tongue and do not have to be taken with water.

For more allergy tips, information on pediatric allergy management and pollen forecasts, visit www.claritin.com.