



spotlight on health

Seasonal Allergies: What Everyone Should Know

(NAPSA)—For more than 36 million Americans, seasonal allergies are something to sneeze at. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America estimates the annual cost of allergies to be nearly \$7 billion. And for adults, allergies (hay fever) are the fifth-leading chronic disease and a major cause of work absenteeism, resulting in nearly 4 million missed or lost workdays each year.

The Usual Suspects

When exposed to grass and tree pollen, allergy sufferers often experience sneezing, runny noses and swollen, itchy, watery eyes. Trees pollinate earliest, from late January through May in most of the country. Trees that disperse allergens include oak, elm, birch, ash, hickory, poplar, sycamore, maple, cypress, walnut and western cedar. Grasses follow next in the cycle, distributing their pollens May to July. Grasses to watch out for are timothy, Bermuda, orchard, redtop and sweet vernal.

Avoiding Allergens

Health experts recommend the following tips to help reduce exposure to allergens:

- Keep windows closed at all times during allergy season to prevent pollen from drifting into your home. Use air-conditioning, which cleans, cools and dries the air.
- Minimize outdoor activity when pollen counts are high. Peak pollen times are usually between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Keep car windows closed when traveling.
- Take a shower after spending time outside; pollen can collect on your hair and skin.
- Don't hang sheets or clothing outside to dry. Pollen can collect on them.



For most people with seasonal allergies, an over-the-counter allergy medication can help make the outdoors more enjoyable.

Treating Allergies

Over-the-counter allergy medications are effective at relieving the most troublesome allergy symptoms, including runny nose, watery eyes and itchy throat. Clinical studies show that BENADRYL® Allergy (50 mg three times daily) is more effective than Claritin® at relieving seasonal allergy symptoms.

Ultimately, getting allergies under control can help people feel comfortable spending time outdoors, exercising and enjoying the beautiful, seasonal weather. In addition, allergy sufferers who treat their allergy symptoms are likely to feel better overall, allowing them to be more active and productive.

For more information about seasonal allergies and to check the pollen count in your area, visit www.benadrylusa.com. Information is also available through the American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology (www.aaaai.org) and the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (www.aafa.org).