

Nasal Congestion Is Most Bothersome Allergy Symptom, Survey Says

(NAPSA)—Each spring, pollen from trees and grass affects an estimated 36 million Americans who suffer from seasonal allergies. Nasal congestion, sneezing, runny nose, or itchy and watery eyes are all signs that you may have allergies. But these symptoms impact more than your health, affecting your mood, daily activities and relationships, according to a recent survey.

Amy Lawrence is no stranger to the difficulties caused by allergies. And as a dance teacher at a performing arts high school in Pennsylvania, Amy knows how her allergies can negatively affect her daily routine and quality of life.

“Of all my allergy symptoms, congestion is the most annoying,” said Lawrence. “Not only does a stuffed-up nose divert my attention away from my students, but it also puts me in a foul mood.”

Amy isn't alone. According to a national survey, 85 percent of nasal allergy sufferers want nasal congestion relief. It's also the number-one symptom allergy sufferers want to prevent.

Nasal congestion also is keeping people at home, unable to go about their daily activities. Survey respondents reported an average of 6.3 missed work days or 8.4 missed school days in the past year due to their nasal allergies. In addition, congestion is the symptom most likely to trigger a visit to the doctor for relief.

“My patients tell me that their nasal congestion is a real nuisance, affecting them in many areas of their life,” said Dr. Eric J. Schenkel, Director, Valley Allergy and Asthma Treatment Center, Easton, PA. “Common complaints include difficulty concentrating and disrupted sleep. Some people even say that their symptoms make them self-conscious around others.”

Nearly one-half of adults say others act uncomfortably around them when they are experiencing nasal congestion, according to the survey.

Reduce Exposure to Allergens

The good news is there are steps allergy sufferers can take to help prevent and treat their nasal congestion. Dr. Schenkel recommends reducing exposure to the various allergens that trigger symptoms. Patients with pollen allergies should avoid spending time outdoors from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m. when pollen counts are highest, and on hot, dry, windy days. It's also helpful to keep windows closed and to use air-conditioning while at home and in the car.

If indoor allergens, such as mold, dust mites and pet dander are the problem, patients can take steps to rid these allergens from their homes. Using a dehumidifier to decrease moisture helps reduce mold, and covering mattresses and pillowcases with allergen-proof encasings helps prevent dust mites from disturbing your sleep. While it is best to keep pets outdoors and away from your furniture, it also helps to wash animals once a week to remove allergens from their fur.

Visit a Doctor

Although avoidance tips are helpful, it is impossible to eliminate exposure to all indoor and outdoor allergens. That's why it is important to visit a doctor for proper diagnosis and to learn about various treatment options.

“Many patients just assume they should take an over-the-counter antihistamine for nasal congestion, but antihistamines are actually better for treating a runny nose, watery eyes and itchy throat,” said Dr. Schenkel. “When congestion is the main problem, a prescription nasal-inhaled steroid is the best treatment option.”



NASONEX® (mometasone furoate monohydrate) Nasal Spray, 50 mcg (calculated on the anhydrous basis), a nasal-inhaled steroid, now is available in a scent-free, alcohol-free formulation.

According to the “Allergy Report” published by the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, nasal-inhaled steroids, are the recommended first-line therapy when nasal congestion is the primary symptom of a patient's allergic rhinitis, the medical term for nasal allergies.

“My doctor prescribed Nasonex and told me to take it every day, starting a couple of weeks before pollen was in the air,” said Lawrence.

“People often are surprised to hear that it is possible to stop symptoms before they start,” said Dr. Schenkel. “All it takes is some planning and a visit to a doctor prior to the allergy season.”

Remember, nasal allergy symptoms don't have to make you miserable. Reducing exposure to allergens, visiting a health care professional for proper diagnosis and taking preventative medications can help you take control of your congestion. For more information about allergies and to check out local pollen forecasts, visit www.nasal-allergies.com.



NASONEX® is the only once-daily prescription nasal-inhaled steroid approved to help prevent most seasonal nasal allergy symptoms, including nasal congestion, in adults and children 12 years of age and older when NASONEX is started 2 to 4 weeks prior to allergy season, and the only nasal-inhaled steroid approved to treat nasal allergy symptoms, including nasal congestion, in patients as young as 2 years of age. Take regularly, as effectiveness depends upon regular use. Maximum treatment effect is generally reached after 1 to 2 weeks. NASONEX also is the first and only nasal-inhaled steroid approved for the treatment of nasal polyps in adults 18 years of age and older. Side effects were generally mild and included headache, viral infection, sore throat, nosebleeds and coughing. Please see accompanying full prescribing information. Full prescribing information also is available at <http://www.spfiles.com/pinasonex.pdf>. Ask your doctor if NASONEX is right for you.