

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

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Newsletter

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Sesame Now the Ninth Most Common Food Allergy in the United States

Dr. Engler and his colleagues recently attended the 2019 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) where a new study regarding sesame allergy was presented.

Sesame has emerged as the ninth most common food allergen in the United States, with this study showing its prevalence to be at least 0.2 percent – or affecting 750,000 Americans. The study was conducted by Dr. Ruchi Gupta and her team at Northwestern University. They also found that among those with a sesame allergy, 38 percent had experienced at least one severe allergic reaction and 67 percent had been to the emergency room department at least once in their life for food allergy treatment.

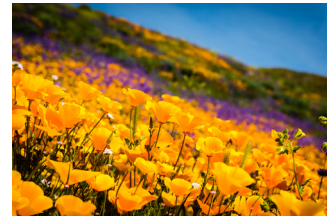
Sesame allergy can cause severe allergic reactions with multiple organ system involvement (also known as anaphylaxis). As sesame is not listed as a major food allergen, consumers may be vulnerable to accidental exposure to this allergen. Sesame is present in a wide, and growing, variety of food products in the form of seeds, oils and pastes (i.e. tahini). Some cosmetics, medications, supplements and pet food also contain sesame.

“It is important for consumers to be aware of sesame allergies,” said Ruchi S. Gupta, MD, MPH. “Consumers must carefully read food labels. Sesame isn’t always listed, and may appear on food labels as other names, or even vague descriptions such as ‘natural flavoring.’”

“If you suspect that you’ve experienced an allergic reaction to sesame, make sure to tell your physician so that you can receive the appropriate confirmatory testing, counseling and if necessary, an epinephrine auto-injector you can use in the event of a future food-allergic reaction.”

California rains have caused a Super Bloom which is causing super allergies

California has witnessed an exceptionally long, wet and cold winter this year and as we approach spring we are also experiencing what is being called a Super Bloom of wild flowers across the state. With this Super Bloom comes a massive amount of pollen. While this is great news for our pollinating insects, it already is and will be an ordeal for allergy sufferers. Most of these wildflowers remained dormant through the drought years, but now, it’s as if a (beautiful) allergy bomb was dropped on the state.



Avoiding your allergy triggers is the best way to reduce symptoms.

- Limit outdoor activities during days with high pollen counts or especially windy days.
- Keep windows closed (at home or in the car) to keep pollens out, especially on windy days.
- Take a shower before going to bed. Otherwise, pollen in your hair may bother you all night.

Often the best solution to pollen allergies is allergy shots or drops (Immunotherapy) which can provide more permanent relief from allergy symptoms. If you have taken leave from your allergy treatment or had been intending to start allergy shots or drops but never got around to doing so, now is the time to start (or re-start) your immunotherapy so your body can better defend itself against another unpleasant allergy season.

Don’t wait! Spring is here! And the sooner you start your allergy treatment, the sooner we can help you feel better.