

# THE ALLERGY & ASTHMA CLINIC

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NEWSLETTER

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## **NBC Reports That Pollen Counts Reach Massive Levels**

Last month, NBC Nightly News anchor, Brian Williams, reported that "Allergy suffering this season is sky high because the sky is full of pollen. Mother Nature has put together a combination of conditions that is making this spring a hay fever nightmare and there is good reason for it."

"Spring is most certainly in the air. Bees are buzzing, everything is blooming but not everyone is happy," stated NBC Chief Medical Editor, Dr. Nancy Snyderman. "The annual pollen attack begun early this year due to heavy winter snow and rain and now unusually warm temperatures across most of the country", reported Dr. Snyderman. All over the country, the pollen count is at near record levels. For more than 40 million Americans who suffer from seasonal allergies, few things could feel worse.

In an interview, allergist, Dr. Gillian Shepherd of New York City noted that complaints have been pouring into her office. "The phone starts ringing, people say please squeeze me in. The minute you see the first flower on the first tree, that's it" Dr. Shepherd said. One of the main culprits this time of year is tree pollen, like the birch tree growing right outside of Dr. Shepherd's office.

For some people, over the counter medications still work but if they don't, prescription medications often offer better relief. As for the age old question, spring cold verses allergies, how can you tell the difference? For one thing, allergies never cause a fever. Allergies rarely cause sore throats and most cold symptoms start with symptoms in the throat. Itchy eyes are a major allergy symptom which one rarely sees with a cold.

"Even for allergy sufferers, it's hard to stay inside. This kind of weather is meant to be enjoyed even if there is a sneeze or a sniffle along the way. And it's not over,

trees will continue to bloom and then the grasses are right around the corner," says Dr. Snyderman. Here in California, grass pollen has already started blooming, and this year's heavy rains have stimulated massive pollen production which is anticipated to last for at least several more months.

## **Web MD Reports That Nearly 20% of Allergy Sufferers Miss Work Due to Their Allergy Symptoms**

Web-MD reported a new survey showing that for nearly one in five seasonal allergy sufferers, their symptoms are so bad that they miss work. Nearly half of all respondents said their allergy symptoms, when at their worst, interfered "a lot" with at least some aspect of their daily lives, such as participating in outdoor activities, sleep, mobility, ability to think or concentrate, social activities, and their relationship with their partner.

Itchy eyes were the most common symptom (87%), followed by sneezing (80%), runny nose (77%), and watery eyes (73%). Other common allergy symptoms included nasal and sinus congestion, headaches, coughing, feeling short of breath and a general feeling of fatigue. Researchers found pollen was by far the most commonly cited source of seasonal allergies (79%).

Given our high pollen counts, now, more than ever, it is important to make sure you get a good night's sleep in an allergy free bedroom. Make sure to rinse pollen out of your hair before you go to sleep at night and to remove any clothes with pollen on them before you get into bed. Pets, especially those allowed outside, should be kept out of the bedroom and windows should be kept closed on windy days to prevent pollen from blowing into your bedroom.

If you or you loved ones are suffering from seasonal allergies, don't despair; remember, excellent treatment options are available. If your current allergy

medications are not giving you the relief you need, now may be the time to discuss whether some of the newer products would work better for you. Please contact us so we can review your treatment options and help you feel your best. And if you have gotten behind on your allergy shots or drops and have been meaning to restart this treatment, don't be embarrassed; let us know and we'll make arrangements to get you back on track with your allergy treatment in no time.

## **Appointment Cancellation Policy**

To accommodate all patients' needs during this busy allergy season, please call our office 48 hours in advance of your appointment time if you have to cancel your appointment. This allows our office the opportunity to accommodate other patient's scheduling needs and give the time we've reserved for you to another patient who would like to be seen.

## **New Phone System Installation**

In order to better serve our patients, our office will be installing a new phone system on June 16-17. All phone calls received in our office after 4PM on Wednesday, June 16 will be directed to our answering service for triage. On Thursday, June 17 at 9AM, our front office staff will resume answering all incoming phone calls. Thank you for your patience and cooperation during this time.

## **Cover Your Cough**

Help stop the spread of germs that can make you and others sick. Serious respiratory illnesses like influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough, and severe respiratory syndrome (SARS) are spread by coughing or sneezing and by unclean hands. To help stop the spread of germs, our office provides protective facemasks and hand sanitizer at the front desk and throughout the clinic. Please help us take all necessary precautions to keep those around us healthy.