

# The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

[www.TheAllergyClinic.com](http://www.TheAllergyClinic.com)

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## Newsletter

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### **New year, New habits...Time to Stay Ahead of Your Allergy and Asthma Symptoms!**

Happy New Year! All of us at The Allergy and Asthma Clinic hope this new year brings you and your loved ones happiness and health, including well controlled allergy symptoms. If you have found that you've fallen off track with your allergy treatment regimen, this new year is a great time to get back into the swing of things. Incorporating a new habit into a routine tends to work better if you do it at the same time each day or week, whether this means taking your inhaler or nasal spray at the same time each day or getting your allergy immunotherapy shots on the same day each week.

Allergy immunotherapy is a desensitization process that gradually helps you become less allergic to the environmental allergens that cause your allergy symptoms through a series of injections (or in some cases, through sublingual drops or tablets when appropriate). The purpose of this desensitization process is to build up your protective immunity to help prevent you from experiencing an allergic reaction in the first place. We recommend getting back on track with your allergy treatment regimen before the upcoming pollen season, which typically starts in late January/early February when Cedar and Juniper trees begin to pollinate. Other tree pollens and grass pollens then bloom in the following months, with airborne pollen typically lasting into the summer. For many, this abundant pollen can trigger uncomfortable and annoying symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose, itchy eyes, coughing, skin itchiness and rashes, post nasal drip, sinus pressure and increases in asthma.

If you've been suffering each Spring and Summer, make it your New Year's Resolution to get ahead of your allergies this year. Fill your prescription medications and pick up any OTC medications (such as antihistamines and steroid nasal sprays) now so that you are prepared when the pollen season hits. For optimal benefit, especially with steroid based nasal sprays like Flonase, Nasacort and Rhinocort, we recommend that you start taking them a couple of weeks before the pollen season begins so that your symptoms do not flare up when pollen fills the air.

If you have been suffering from allergies, make this the year that you put your health first! Meet with one of our healthcare providers to identify what you are allergic to. Together, we will discuss steps to limit your exposure to these allergens, design and implement a medication regimen that works for you, and discuss allergy immunotherapy as a non-medicated option to help treat and prevent your underlying allergies. By getting to the root of the problem with immunotherapy, rather than just treating the symptoms, you can limit your need for future medication, and help keep your allergies under optimum control for years to come!



### **It's Raining, It' Snowing....and my Nose is Blowing.**

This time of year, many of our patients are headed to the snow to participate in winter sports. Lake Tahoe is a popular destination. While snow may bring respite from the airborne pollen, there is still a hidden source of allergen exposure: dust mites. Dust mites are microscopic organisms and they require a relatively high humidity in the air for survival. Tahoe remains quite humid compared to the higher elevations and dry air of the mountains in Utah and Colorado. Thus, you tend to find more dust mites living in the bedding, mattresses, and carpets in Tahoe. Your home in the Bay Area likely has even more dust mites than Tahoe, as it is typically even more humid. At home, you should have dust proof covers on your bedding and non-carpeted floors wherever possible, and vacuum carpeted areas frequently. If you are staying in a cabin or hotel on your next ski trip, bring your own pillow with a dust proof cover on it, and avoid sleeping on feather bedding. Also, ensure that you start your allergy medications a week before your trip, and take the medication daily during your trip.

If you notice this pattern of allergy flare ups when you travel, take the time to undergo allergy skin testing to find out if you have an allergy to dust mite or some other environmental allergen. Allergy immunotherapy may be a great long term solution for you to keep you feeling healthy when you're on the go.