

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

www.TheAllergyClinic.com

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SPRING IS HERE!

Spring brings new life and as some of the COVID restrictions have been lifted, we are all starting to venture out beyond our homes and resume some activities, including being outdoors. The recent rains have brought us greenery and colorful flowers, but for the allergy sufferer, this beauty also means pollen is in the air.

Spending time outdoors has numerous health benefits, including improving one's mood, reducing one's stress and improving one's physical health. Being active is a part of the California lifestyle and we are very lucky to have so many beautiful areas to choose from. The key to enjoying the outdoors for the allergy patient is to take preventative steps to keep your allergies under optimum control. First and foremost, find out what you are allergic to and check pollen counts in your area. Here are a few other suggestions.

- If you plan on spending time outdoors (such as hiking or walking on a trail, etc.), take a non-sedating antihistamine beforehand. If you have been prescribed a preventative lung or nasal spray, make sure to take these medications daily as prescribed. Using nasal saline, which can rinse pollen and other irritants out of the nose, can also provide relief.
- Wear sunglasses when you are outside during the day. If you wear contact lenses, consider wearing glasses instead, as pollen can sometimes get in between the eyes and the contact lenses. Use your allergy eye drops if prescribed, but as a general rule, avoid allergy eye drops with decongestants, which may have rebound side effects.

- After your outdoor activity, make sure that you keep the clothes and the shoes worn outside out of the bedroom. The last thing you want to do is bring pollen and other allergens into your bedroom. Take a shower and rinse pollen out of your hair before you go to bed at night.
- We now know the benefits of wearing a mask to reduce the risk of COVID transmission, but wearing a mask can also help to prevent breathing in pollen and other allergens.

Here are other steps you can take to minimize your exposure to pollen when you are home.

- Keep the bedroom windows closed, especially during windy days. Pollen counts are highest between 5:00 AM and 10:00 AM and again at dusk.
- Keep your garden maintained and prevent the overgrowth of grass and other foliage. Make sure that you do not overwater since stagnant water can promote the growth of mold.
- Change the filters in your heating and cooling system regularly and ideally, you want to use an electrostatic filter, which is designed to better trap allergens.
- Establish a regular cleaning routine, placing emphasis on dust and other pollen avoidance measures.

If you are taking allergy immunotherapy (injections or sublingual drops), make sure to stay on schedule to keep your underlying allergies under optimum control. If you've gotten off-track and missed a few doses, please contact us so we can help you get restarted with any necessary dosing adjustments.

As with any medical condition, being proactive can help to prevent flare-ups. By keeping your allergies under control, you will be more likely to enjoy the outdoors and all it has to offer. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office and we will get you on your way to feeling well!