

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

www.TheAllergyClinic.com

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Newsletter

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Pollen Counts Are On the Rise



Allergic Conjunctivitis

During this time of year, in addition to nasal allergy symptoms, we see a number of patients who suffer from “eye allergies”, formally called allergic conjunctivitis. Allergic conjunctivitis is inflammation of the lining of the eye (conjunctiva), usually due to an allergy. Although there can be a number of allergens which can contribute to allergic conjunctivitis, pollen is a common cause. Symptoms include redness, itching and watering of the eyes and many patients describe the sensation that there is “something in their eye”. Some even experience clear, watery discharge from the eyes. Although eye irritation can occur in association with sneezing, runny nose or nasal congestion, it can also occur independently. Common allergy triggers include:

- Outdoor allergens such as pollen from trees, grasses and weeds
- Indoor allergens, such as animal dander, dust/dust mite and mold
- Environmental irritants such as smoke (from fires or cigarettes), exhaust, perfumes and chemicals/cleaning agents

Treatment for allergic conjunctivitis may include:

- Cold Compresses
- Artificial tears.
- Anti-allergy eye drops or oral medications (over-the-counter or prescription). Note that if an allergy eye drop has been recommended, make sure the eye drop does not contain a decongestant, as decongestants can be associated with rebound side effects.
- Avoid know allergens as much as possible.
- Wash your face or take a shower and rinse your hair (preferably before you go to bed at night) after being outside, and after exposure to environmental allergens such as dust or pollen.
- Keep pollen laden clothing and shoes worn out of the house, out of the bedroom.
- Keep contact lenses and cases clean and change your contact solution daily. On windy days, if possible, try to avoid wearing contact lenses, and instead wear glasses, as pollen can get between the eyes and the contact lens.
- Wear sunglasses when you are outside.
- Do your best not to “rub” your eyes, as this can further irritate the eyes.
- If you are on them, get your allergy shots or drops consistently, especially during this time of the year.

If you have noticed an increase in your symptoms, make sure that you are taking all necessary steps and precautions to decrease the impact of allergies in your overall health. If there has been a marked change in your symptoms, now may be the time to update your environmental allergy skin testing, keeping in mind that you need to be off of all oral antihistamines for at least 3 days.

**In observance of the Presidents' Holiday,
our office will be closed on Monday,
February 20.**