

Spring and Seasonal Allergies

Seasonal allergies, also called allergic rhinitis, or “hay fever,” typically occur during pollen seasons in the spring, summer or fall.

Perennial allergic rhinitis occurs throughout the year, and may be caused by exposure to indoor allergens such as dust mites, indoor molds or pets.

According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, up to 40 percent of children in the United States suffer from seasonal allergies. These allergies can cause a host of symptoms, including a stuffy or runny nose, congestion, sneezing, itchy eyes and nose, sore throat, chronic cough, and dark circles under the eyes.

Some of the consequences of seasonal allergies in children are:

- Congestion-related issues, including fatigue and poor concentration in school due to lack of sleep
- An increase in ear and sinus infections
- Absence from school due to illness
- Uncontrolled allergies can exacerbate asthma

Preventing allergic rhinitis

There are some steps you can take to make your child more comfortable during allergy season:

- Keep windows and doors closed to avoid exposure to pollen.
- Check the forecast for pollen levels, and limit outdoor activities when pollen levels are reported to be high.
- Dry clothes in the dryer, not by hanging them outside, to avoid pollen dust.
- Have your child take her bath at bedtime, which may help to wash off allergens and prevent nighttime allergy problems.
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There are a number of medications, both prescription and over the counter, that can help relieve the symptoms of seasonal allergies. Consult your child’s physician for a recommendation on treatment. If your child’s symptoms do not improve with medication or by avoiding outdoor exposure, your child’s physician may refer him to an allergist. An allergist will test which pollen or molds are causing the allergy symptoms and prescribe a treatment plan to help your child feel better.

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