Seasonal allergies: Nip them in the bud

Relieve seasonal allergies with these tried-and-true techniques.

Spring means flower buds and blooming trees — and if you're one of the millions of people who have seasonal allergies, it also means sneezing, congestion, runny nose and other bothersome symptoms. Seasonal allergies — also called hay fever and allergic rhinitis — can make you miserable. But before you settle for plastic flowers and artificial turf, try these simple strategies to keep seasonal allergies under control.

Reduce your exposure to allergy triggers
To reduce your exposure to the things that trigger your allergy signs and symptoms (allergens):

- Stay indoors on dry, windy days — the best time to go outside is after a good rain, which helps clear pollen from the air.
- Delegate lawn mowing, weed pulling and other gardening chores that stir up allergens.
- Remove clothes you've worn outside; you may also want to shower to rinse pollen from your skin and hair.
- Don't hang laundry outside — pollen can stick to sheets and towels.
- Wear a dust mask if you do outside chores.

Take extra steps when pollen counts are high
Seasonal allergy signs and symptoms can flare up when there's a lot of pollen in the air. These steps can help you reduce your exposure:

- Check your local TV or radio station, your local newspaper, or the Internet for pollen forecasts and current pollen levels.
- If high pollen counts are forecasted, start taking allergy medications before your symptoms start.
- Close doors and windows at night or any other time when pollen counts are high.
- Avoid outdoor activity in the early morning when pollen counts are highest.

Keep indoor air clean
There's no miracle product that can eliminate all allergens from the air in your home, but these suggestions may help:

- Use the air conditioning in your house and car.
- If you have forced air heating or air conditioning in your house, use high-efficiency filters and follow regular maintenance schedules.
- Keep indoor air dry with a dehumidifier.
- Use a portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter in your bedroom.
- Clean floors often with a vacuum cleaner that has a HEPA filter.

Source: Mayo Clinic
Pollen Allergy

Of all the things that can cause an allergy, pollen is one of the most common. Many people know pollen allergy as hay fever, but health experts usually refer to it as “seasonal allergic rhinitis.” This simply means an allergy to pollen that makes your nose run during certain seasons.

An allergy is a specific reaction of your body’s immune system to a normally harmless substance. People who have allergies often are sensitive to more than one substance. In addition to pollen from plants, other airborne allergens that can cause allergic reactions include materials from house dust mites, pet dander, and cockroaches.

Symptoms of pollen allergy include runny nose, sneezing, itchy eyes, congestion of the nose, and red and watery eyes.

Some grasses that produce pollen:
• Timothy grass
• Kentucky bluegrass
• Johnson grass
• Bermuda grass
• Redtop grass
• Orchard grass
• Sweet vernal grass

Some trees that produce pollen:
• Oak
• Ash
• Elm
• Hickory
• Pecan
• Box elder
• Mountain cedar

Healthy recipe: asparagus with lemon sauce

Ingredients:
20 medium asparagus spears, rinsed and trimmed
1 fresh lemon, rinsed (for peel and juice)
2 Tbsp reduced-fat mayonnaise
1 Tbsp dried parsley
¼ tsp ground black pepper
1/16 tsp salt

Instructions:
Place 1 inch of water in a 4-quart pot with a lid. Place a steamer basket inside the pot, and add asparagus. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium. Cook for 5–10 minutes, until asparagus is easily pierced with a sharp knife. Do not overcook.

While the asparagus cooks, grate the lemon zest into a small bowl. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze the juice into the bowl. Use the back of a spoon to press out extra juice and remove pits. Add mayonnaise, parsley, pepper, and salt. Stir well. Set aside.

When the asparagus is tender, remove the pot from the heat. Place asparagus spears in a serving bowl. Drizzle the lemon sauce evenly over the asparagus (about 1½ teaspoons per portion) and serve.

Nutrition Facts:
Calories 39  Total Fat 0 g
Saturated Fat 0 g  Sodium 107 mg
Total Carbohydrate 7 g  Dietary Fiber 2 g
Potassium 241 mg

Seasonal Allergies: Treatment

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<tr>
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<td>Avoid those things that you are allergic to, such as pollen, house dust mites, mold, pet dander, cockroaches</td>
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Complications

| Sinus infection |
| Middle ear infection |
| Asthma exacerbation |

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Source: National Library of Medicine
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