

A TIP IN TIME MAY SAVE A DIME

Monthly health and wellness tips:

SPRING has SPRUNG



Each month you will receive health tips and information based on a dimension of health and wellness issues to expand your knowledge and help improve your health and wellbeing.

Spring has arrived and people are jumping for joy that the winter season is over. However, spring is the season of new beginnings and blooming, with trees and flowers releasing pollen (plant powder) into the air. When human beings inhale this pollen, which is an allergen, it can trigger allergic reactions called hay fever, allergic rhinitis, and contact dermatitis.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HAY FEVER OR ALLERGIC RHINITIS

In most instances, the signs and symptoms are mild to moderate, but might become severe in those with compromised immune systems or when one is in an area that is densely populated with flowers and plantations.

Some people may experience sneezing, itching, runny or stuffy nose, coughing, red, itchy, swollen, watery eyes, and a post-nasal drip, where there is a sensation of mucus dripping down the back of the throat.

PREVENTION:

To prevent an allergic reaction: minimize exposure to pollen and dust; wear a mask and sunglasses when outdoor, and wash bedlinen and floors frequently.

TREATMENTS:

Although treatments are available over the counter (OTC), a severe allergic reaction will require a doctor's prescription.

- Antihistamines are available in pills, nasal sprays, drops, or liquid forms: These can relieve symptoms such as itchy eyes and nose, runny nose, and sneezing.
- Decongestants are available in pills, nasal sprays and drops, or liquid forms: These work by shrinking the lining of the nasal passages and reducing stuffiness.
- Eye drops: Eye drops treat eye allergies. Eye drops can provide short-term relief for redness, itchiness, and swelling.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ALLERGIC CONTACT DERMATITIS:

Allergic contact dermatitis occurs when a substance (allergen) to which one is sensitive to, triggers an immune reaction in the skin. It often affects only the area that came into contact with the allergen. Signs and symptoms of contact dermatitis vary widely and may include:

- An itchy rash
- Leathery patches that are darker than usual (hyperpigmented)
- Dry, cracked, scaly skin
- Bumps and blisters, sometimes with oozing and crusting
- Swelling, burning, or tenderness

An allergy occurs when a person's immune system overreacts to an otherwise harmless substance, known as an allergen. When a person has an allergy, the body produces antibodies that travel to the cells that release a chemical, called histamine as well as other chemicals. Histamine then causes swelling in the nose and eyes to stop the allergens from entering the body.

Home remedies:

Numerous natural remedies may bring relief to people experiencing spring allergies.

- Steam inhalation

To inhale steam, place a bowl of boiling water on a table. Cover head, face, and bowl with a towel and breathe in the vapours. Take care to avoid scalding the skin when using hot water.

- Saline rinse

Saline rinses can help relieve stuffy nose and congestion by thinning out extra mucus from the nasal passages. The solution can also clear out allergens from the nostrils and sinuses.

To make a sinus rinse:

- Mix half a tsp of salt and half a tsp of baking soda with lukewarm water and stir until the solids have dissolved.
- Using an ear bulb, squeeze bottle, or saline rinse bottle, squeeze the solution into the right then the left nostril. Keep the head over a sink or bath, as the solution will come out of the nostrils.

PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

You can take the following steps to help prevent contact dermatitis:

- Avoid irritants and allergens that cause the rash.
- Wash your skin regularly.
- Wear protective clothing or gloves when handling plants.
- Apply skin moisturizers, barrier cream, or gel.
- Apply antihistamine creams.

References: Allergic Rhinitis - Medinformer
<https://www.healthline.com/health/contact-dermatitis>

