

Making the Most of Your Spring Allergy Visit

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Spring is the busiest time of year at your allergist's office as patients begin experiencing the first symptoms of seasonal allergies, or 'hay fever.'

An estimated 35 million Americans suffer from allergies to pollen and mold, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology. Symptoms include sneezing, a stuffy or runny nose and itchy, watery eyes.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Each year, more than 12 million doctor's visits result from allergic rhinitis. Symptoms from seasonal allergies are among the primary reasons people miss school or work.
- Allergists are the best doctors to diagnose and treat allergies and asthma. Find an allergist in your area at www.aaaai.org.
- Allergy shots can reduce symptoms in up to 85% of patients with seasonal allergies. Ask your allergist if they can work for you.

If you're planning to see an allergist/immunologist this spring, make sure you get the most from your appointment by writing down your questions and concerns ahead of time. Let your allergist know if:

- **You have any new symptoms** or symptoms that are worse than in previous years. Be sure to mention if you experience coughing, difficulty breathing or loss of sleep, as these can be signs of asthma.
- **You have missed school or work** due to allergy or asthma symptoms. It's very important that you report any related hospitalizations or visits to the emergency department. Your allergist can help you gain better control of your allergies and asthma.
- **You are taking any medications**, even if they are over-the-counter. This includes any herbal supplements. This information will help your allergist/immunologist prescribe safe treatments.

You might also want to ask these questions:

- **Am I currently on the best treatment plan?** With proper treatment, most allergies and asthma can be managed so they do not interfere with life.
- **What steps can I take to avoid allergy symptoms?** There may be simple changes you can make to prevent reactions.
- **What other treatment options are available?** This may include allergy shots, less expensive medications or home remedies.

Visit the AAAAI Web site, www.aaaai.org, for information on preventing seasonal allergy symptoms, to learn more about allergy medications, check pollen counts in your area or locate an allergist near you.



Your source for more information
or to find an allergist/immunologist.

To the Point

In most parts of the country, trees are the first plants to pollinate, beginning in early spring. Grass pollen is present in the early summer months and weed pollen (such as ragweed) arrives in the late summer and fall. Allergy sufferers in many areas get relief in winter months when pollen levels are extremely low. Not so in Texas, where highly-allergenic cedar trees peak in January.