



**ALLERGY  
ASSOCIATES**  
INDEPENDENT ALLERGY AND ASTHMA PHYSICIANS

KRAIG W. JACOBSON, MD  
SARAH S. KEHL, MD  
JASON H. FRIESEN, MD  
MELANIE CHALA WAYNE, MSN, FNP-BC

1488 OAK STREET, EUGENE  
OR 97401 541-683-1577

---

## Measures to minimize hay fever symptoms

For those who suffer from the sneeze and wheeze of hay fever, here are some practical measures you may want to consider. These suggestions are all aimed at decreasing your exposure to inhalant pollens and, along with your medical management, help to decrease the symptoms of hay fever.

Exposure to pollens causes your hay fever symptoms. Consider planning summer vacations during your pollen period. Grass pollination begins in the month of May and usually lasts until early in July. Tree pollens are at their peak from February through April, and weed pollens are most troublesome from August through October.

Keep windows at home closed in order to decrease the amount of pollen in your home. Spend as much time indoors as possible, especially in air conditioned buildings, during your peak pollen season. When driving, keep windows up and use air conditioning if available. Air conditioning successfully removes 90 to 95% of pollens. Bear in mind that extremely cold air may provoke nasal symptoms.

Avoid events that will aggravate your symptoms by increasing your pollen exposure, such as bicycling, jogging, and hiking. Remember, the more time you spend outside, the greater your symptoms.

If you are bothered by eye symptoms, wear glasses or sunglasses when you are outside. This will decrease the impact of pollens on your eyes.

During your pollen season you may find that you are more sensitive to other substances. This is because your mucous membranes are already irritated and it takes less exposure to these substances to evoke symptoms. Avoiding non-specific irritants such as strong odors (perfumes, cosmetics, paint fumes, detergent odors, dust, and tobacco smoke) is also advised.

Use antihistamines on a regular basis as prescribed. They will give you better relief than if you use them only when you are already having major symptoms.

If, during your pollen season, you have an asthma attack during the day, remember that chest symptoms generally worsen in the evening. Call your doctor immediately and get treatment to avoid the expense of an after hours emergency room visit.

# Allergic Rhinitis

Symptoms of allergic rhinitis include itchy, runny, sneezy or stuffy nose, and itchy eyes. When it is caused by pollen from trees, grass or weeds, it is commonly called hay fever. Year round allergies may be caused by house dust mites, mold spores and animals.

TREATMENT options include avoidance of allergens, medications and allergy injections

- Antihistamines and decongestants may be taken individually or in combination. Over-the-counter antihistamines include: *Loratidine* (Claritin or Alavert), *Fexofenadine* (Allegra) which is non-sedating and *Cetirizine* (Zyrtec or Aller-Tec at Costco) which can cause drowsiness. Prescription antihistamines such as *Claritin* do not cause drowsiness; *Xyzal* can cause some to feel drowsy. Decongestants such as *Sudafed* (pseudoephedrine) help nasal stuffiness. They sometimes cause jitteriness or trouble sleeping and in older men may cause difficulty urinating. Combinations such as *Allegra D* or *Claritin D* contain both types of medications. *Astelin* and *Patanase* are antihistamine nasal sprays.
- Leukotriene antagonists (*Singulair* or *Accolate*) may be used alone or in combination with other medication
- Some nasal steroid sprays such as *Flonase*, *Nasacort*, or *Rhinocort* may be found over the counter. Others, like *Nasonex*, *Veramyst* or *Omnaris* are prescription. Nasal steroids are safe and effective in preventing and controlling symptoms, especially if used regularly. They may be started 2-3 weeks prior to your allergy season for best effectiveness. Check your technique if nasal bleeding occurs and consider adding saline rinses to reduce irritation and dryness. *Nasal crom* is an over-the-counter non-steroid spray that is very safe but must be used frequently and before pollen exposure.
- *Prednisone* tablets are sometimes used on a short-term basis for extremely severe symptoms but do not provide long-term relief and may have severe side effects when used repeatedly.
- Eye drops containing antihistamines are available without a prescription. *Zaditor* or *Alaway* (Ketotifen) is the OTC eye drop that we recommend. Prescription eye drops such as *Patanol*, *Pataday*, *Optivar*, *Elestat*, *Pazeo*, and *Crolom* may be helpful.
- Immunotherapy (allergy injections or sublingual tablets) is a treatment program that decreases your sensitivity to the things that cause your allergy
- **Use caution if you use over-the-counter nasal decongestants such as Afrin or OTC eye drops other than antihistamine eye drops. These products may improve symptoms at first but then can rapidly cause worsening of symptoms if overused.**