

# Sneezing, coughing and itchy eyes: How to manage your allergies in spring

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Spring is arriving soon, which means warmer temperatures and more opportunities to enjoy outdoor activities.

But if you're one of the millions of Americans who suffer from allergies, going outside when pollen is in the air may not be a good idea.

Here's how to keep your seasonal allergies in check during the warmer months.

What causes spring allergies?

The biggest cause of spring allergies is pollen, according to WebMD.

In [spring](#), trees, grasses and weeds release tiny grains of pollen into the air to fertilize other plants. When they enter your nose, your [immune system](#) can mistake the pollen for a danger and release antibodies that attack the allergens.

This often leads to the release of histamines into your blood, which can trigger allergy symptoms like:

- Runny nose
- Watery eyes
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Itchy eyes and nose
- Dark circles under the eyes

How to reduce your exposure to allergy triggers

There are steps you can take to reduce your exposure to things that trigger your allergy symptoms, according to Mayo Clinic:

- Stay inside on dry, windy days. The best time to go outside is after it rains, when pollen is cleared from the air.
- Shower after spending time outside to rinse pollen from your

skin and hair.

- Wear a pollen mask if you decide to do chores outside.
- Avoid [outdoor activities](#) in the early morning when pollen counts are highest.
- Close your doors and windows at night or when pollen counts are high.
- Start taking [allergy medications](#) before your symptoms appear.

### Over-the-counter remedies for allergies

According to Mayo Clinic, many types of nonprescription medications can help ease allergy symptoms. They include:

- Oral antihistamines to relieve sneezing, itching, [runny nose](#) and watery eyes like Claritin, Alavert, Zyrtec Allergy and Allegra Allergy
- Decongestants to provide relief from nasal stuffiness like Sudafed and Afrinol
- Nasal spray to ease allergy symptoms
- Some OTC medications like Claritin-D and Allegra-D that combine an antihistamine with a decongestant

### How to keep the air inside your house allergen-free

It's impossible to eliminate all the allergens from the air in your home, Mayo Clinic says, but these methods can help reduce them:

- Use high-efficiency filters in your air conditioning unit and follow regular maintenance schedules.
- Keep indoor air dry with a dehumidifier.
- Use a portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter in your bedroom.

- Use a [vacuum cleaner](#) that has a HEPA air filter.

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