

Welcome Spring and Still Survive Your Allergies

Tips for minimizing seasonal misery



(HealthDay News) -- If you have seasonal allergies, the arrival of spring is probably less about warmth and flowers and more about itchy eyes and congestion.

But there are ways to ease allergy misery and keep asthma symptoms in check, according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI).

"People think they're doing everything they can to battle spring allergies," said ACAAI President Dr. Stephen Tilles, a Washington-based allergist.

"But many still find themselves under siege from pollen and other allergens that appear once the weather starts to warm up. What they don't realize is that by following a few simple rules they can make life a lot more pleasant, and their allergies more bearable," he said in a news release from the group.

Here, he offers some tips:

- Do some spring cleaning. Dust and cobwebs can accumulate over the winter. Mold can also build up in bathrooms and the basement, particularly in spring when humidity rises. Furry pets may also start shedding in spring, leaving more dander and hair around the house. Cleaning the house, vacuuming and washing upholstery can help remove allergens from the air and help ensure your nasal passages stay clear.

- Consider asthma. Many people with seasonal allergies also have asthma, making springtime doubly difficult. If you have a nagging cough or trouble breathing, talk to an allergist. These specialists can diagnose asthma and help you manage your symptoms.
- The best way to do that is with a HEPA room air cleaner rated with a Clean Air Delivery Rate (CADR). If you have central air, change your air filters every three months and use filters with a MERV rating of 11 or 12. Steer clear of ionic air filters, which make dust and pollen particles stick to whatever they touch. These air filters don't provide much benefit to those with allergies, the asthma and allergy group cautions. They also produce ozone, which is a health risk.
- Keep windows closed. In spring it's tempting to open the windows and let in some fresh air, but this allows pollen to blow inside your home and settle in your rugs and furniture. This can cause allergy symptoms to flare up. Keep your windows closed and use air conditioning with a new air filter.
- Consult an expert. Don't rely solely on the Internet for expert medical advice. An allergist is a specially trained doctor who can help you identify the cause of your symptoms and determine the best treatment.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers more on allergies. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/entertainment/tips/allergies.html>

-- Mary Elizabeth Dallas

SOURCE: American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, news release, Feb. 23, 2017

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Everything You Need to Know About Exercise and Hydration

(HealthDay News) -- Working up a good sweat when you exercise lets you know you're working hard, but it's also a sign that you're losing water -- water that needs to be replaced.



Water not only regulates your body temperature, it also helps lubricate joints and transport nutrients. If you're not properly hydrated, you won't be able to perform at your peak. You could even experience fatigue, cramps and more.

And thirst is actually a sign that you're already getting dehydrated.

You want to prep before you take your first workout step. In fact, no matter what time you exercise, it's important to hydrate throughout the day.

A good rule of thumb is to drink 2 cups of water in the hours before exercise, and then another cup 20 minutes in advance. During exercise, drink up to one cup every 20 minutes or so. When working out for over an hour, you may need a sports drink. After the workout, have a cup of water within half an hour.

Here's an example of a hydration schedule.

Before exercise:

- Up to 2.5 cups of water over 2 to 4 hours pre-workout
- Up to 1 cup of water 20 minutes pre-workout

During exercise:

- 0.5 to 1 cup of water every 20 minutes

After exercise:

- 1 cup of water within 30 minutes
- More as needed: 2.5 to 3 cups of water for each pound lost



You can tell if you're properly hydrated if your urine is light in color. The darker the color, the more dehydrated you are. For a more exact reading, weigh yourself before and after exercise.

Water weight loss can be dangerous. Just a 1 percent change in your body weight can signal dehydration.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more on the importance of hydration for exercise, as well as warning signs of dehydration. <https://familydoctor.org/athletes-the-importance-of-goodhydration/>

– Mary Elizabeth Dallas

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Health Tip: Eat Less Salt

(HealthDay News) -- Eating less salt could help you avoid heart disease or stroke.

The U.S. Office on Women's Health suggests how to cut the amount of salt in your diet:

- Eat fewer processed foods.
- Check the sodium content on the product's nutrition facts label.
- Avoid foods with lots of salt.

- Season your food with herbs and spices, instead of salt.
- Get used to eating less salty foods.

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