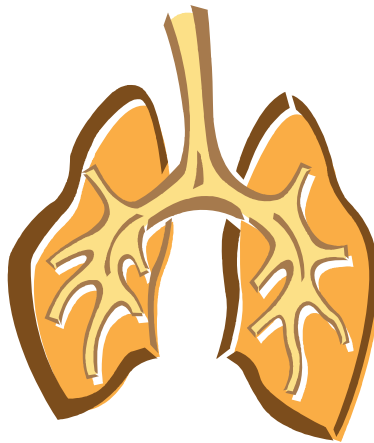


# SPRINGTIME ALLERGENS AND ASTHMA



Spring is here and that means for 40 to 50 million Americans, so are many allergies. Allergic diseases, such as allergic asthma, affect more than 20% of the population and are the sixth leading cause of disease in the United States.

Allergic asthma is the most common form of asthma. Asthma is considered allergic when symptoms become more intense, perhaps resulting in an asthma attack, when you are exposed to things you are allergic to.

## **What are the symptoms of allergic and non-allergic asthma?**

The symptoms of allergic and non-allergic asthma are similar. They include:

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath or rapid breathing
- Chest tightness

About 60% of asthma attacks are caused by allergens, such as pollen and animal dander. Other allergens such as medications, food, and cockroaches can trigger a reaction.

If your asthma is triggered by allergens, it is important to avoid them.

## **How do I manage my asthma?**

No matter how hard you try, you can not completely avoid allergens, especially in the spring. Here are some tips to help reduce attacks caused by allergens and irritants:

- Watch for ozone alerts. These alerts will keep you aware of potential triggers.
- Minimize outdoor activity on days when the temperature is excessively high.

- Take medications as prescribed. Do not take more medicine to ease severe symptoms without consulting your doctor.
- Use an air conditioner in your home and car to keep air clean, cool and dry.
- Do not stand directly behind cars that are running. Exhaust fumes could trigger an attack.
- Ask your doctor for a written treatment plan. A sample plan is attached.

Asthma management also includes using proper medications to prevent and control symptoms and reduce airway inflammation; therefore, asthma medications are categorized into two general classes, quick-relief and long-term control medications. Ask your doctor which ones you are on.

### **When should I see an allergy/asthma specialist?**

The better informed you are about your asthma triggers and management, the less your symptoms will interfere with your day to day activities.

You should see your allergist/immunologist if you:

- aren't sure whether or not you have asthma,
- have asthma but your symptoms are getting worse,
- have a history of seasonal or persistent asthma and would like to find out what you are allergic to,
- need education on asthma,
- are in need of a daily asthma medication, or
- are not using medications as prescribed and it is limiting your ability to control your asthma.

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# MY ASTHMA ACTION PLAN

Patients Name \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

After Hours Emergency No.: \_\_\_\_\_

**Treatment Goals:** *To keep free of asthma symptoms as possible.*

Personal Asthma Triggers: \_\_\_\_\_ Cats \_\_\_\_\_ Molds \_\_\_\_\_ Fumes  
\_\_\_\_\_ Dogs \_\_\_\_\_ Dust/dust mites  
\_\_\_\_\_ Cold air \_\_\_\_\_ Humidity \_\_\_\_\_ Pollen  
\_\_\_\_\_ Smoke \_\_\_\_\_ Respiratory infections  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Asthma Signs and Symptoms	Medications	How Much	How many time/day
<i>You feel good</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>You have no wheeze or cough</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Your peak flow is _____ or more</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>You feel tight</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Your peak flow is _____ Or less</i>	_____	_____	_____

**Special Instructions:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_