

Seasonal Allergies: The Risk to Your Child

Dr. Ashley Hineman, Pediatrician

Does your child walk around the house sneezing, congested, rubbing at their nose and eyes? Many children face these problems each spring. These symptoms can be bothersome and interfere with sleep, making it hard to focus during the day, and may lead to behavioral problems.

Seasonal allergies occur during the fall through spring months when there are many indoor and outdoor triggers. Children present with a runny nose, cough in the morning or at night with postnasal drainage and itchy, red eyes. They should not have a fever. They may have discolorations under their eyes and a crease on the top of their nose from wiping it so frequently. The most common triggers are animal dander, mold and dust. Children with allergies are at more risk of developing asthma and eczema in the future, and are more likely to develop ear, eye and sinus infections.

Indoor triggers are hard to get rid of and tend to contribute to year-round allergies versus seasonal ones. They include pet dander, mold and dust mites. Your child is likely exposed to them on a daily basis.

Outdoor triggers are hard to avoid, but change with the seasons. These include pollens (grasses, weeds, trees) and mold spores.

So What Can You Do?

- Make sure you keep your windows closed in your house (especially in your child's bedroom) and when you are driving in the car
- Use hypoallergenic pillows and bedding
- Use an air filter in your house
- Use a cool-mist humidifier (make sure you clean it weekly and change the filter frequently)
- Keep pets out of your child's sleeping area
- Have your child shower and wash their hair after playing outside
- Remove carpet from main living areas
- Elevate the head of the bed while sleeping
- Wash sheets and blankets in hot water once a week to remove allergens and kill dust mites
- Normal saline washes to nasal passages
- If it is a windy day or someone has just mowed the lawn next door, keep your children indoors

Call your doctor if your child's symptoms are interfering with their school day or with their play

if they are younger so they can be evaluated. Your doctor may prescribe antihistamine medication. Try to avoid using over-the-counter decongestants that might help alleviate symptoms for a few days but then cause a rebound nasal congestion afterwards.

For more allergy information, visit: www.800.allergy.com, allergyasthmatech.com, and www.nationalallergy.com.

Dr. Ashley Hineman is a Pediatrician at Valley Of The Sun Pediatrics. She can be reached at 623-455-8280 or visit her website at www.valleyofthesunpediatrics.com.