

Spring is here! Help is around the corner!

Spring is here, finally! You see bright colored flowers, and green vegetations all around you. It is tempting for you to go out and spend most of your time outdoors gardening, playing sports or hiking. You are not wrong to think like this and you are not alone if you do so. After all it is not cold outside any more and there is magic in the air! But be careful, if you happen to be one of the millions of allergy sufferers.

People like you with allergies can encounter many problems outdoors if you are not mindful of them. If you suffer from allergic rhinitis (Hay fever) or allergy induced asthma, you want to make sure that you are taking your allergy and or asthma medications daily as prescribed. Pollens come out of plants in AM but peak in the air in PM. Please ensure that doors and windows of your house are not kept open at night. This will prevent pollens from gaining entry. Spring is perfect time for people to go for picnics or for long hikes. There is nothing wrong in this. Please make sure that you take a good shower to wash off pollens from your hair and change clothes before going to bed. If you decide to mend your garden or cut your grass, wear protective clothes, mask and goggles and take your rescue inhaler and or non-sedating antihistamine tablet before the activity. Take a shower and change clothes afterwards. If you decide to go for long drives, please make sure that car windows are up, air-conditioning is on and air-circulation in the car is set for inside.

Your eczema could flare up from inhaling or from coming in direct contact with pollens or vegetations. You can enjoy your outdoor life much better, by wearing protective clothing, taking a non-sedating antihistamine daily to reduce itching, regularly applying emollients to your skin twice daily and using medication creams or ointments your doctor may have prescribed sparingly over affected areas. If you suffer from food allergies, please ensure that you do not share foods during picnics, read labels before eating foods and have available EpiPen or Twinject and Benadryl for emergency use. If you are allergic to latex, please make sure that your picnic companions are not using latex gloves to handle food.

You are not the only one wanting to enjoy spring. There are other creatures too that want to do the same thing. If you are allergic to bees, wasps, hornets, yellow jackets or fire ants, then you should do the following: Avoid walking barefoot in the grass. Insect repellents DO NOT work against stinging insects. Never swat or flail at a flying insect. Do not drink from open beverage cans as insects can crawl inside them attracted by the sweet beverage. When eating outdoors, try to keep food covered at all times. Stinging insects are fond of the same foods you are. Garbage cans stored outside should be covered with tight- fitting lids. Avoid wearing sweet-smelling perfumes, hairsprays, colognes, and deodorants. Avoid wearing bright colored clothing with flowery patterns. Bees may mistake you for flowers! Following bee stings, it is important to remove the stinger within 30 seconds of a sting. Preferred methods of removal include: Flicking the stinger out with your finger, gently scraping it out with something like a butter knife or credit card or gently placing cellophane tape over the stinger and surrounding skin. Pull the tape off the skin to remove the stinger. Avoid pinching it out with your fingers or

tweezers, which can release more venom into your skin. Wear a Medic Alert bracelet. Use EpiPen or Twinject and Benadryl following advice given by your doctor. Call 911 immediately after using them.

If you are one of those people who dread spring because your allergies go haywire, please worry no more. This may be the time for you to find out what you are allergic to and do something about it. Allergies can be diagnosed easily by undergoing simple skin tests or blood tests. Skin tests are more sensitive, cost-effective, and take only 20 minutes to do when compared to blood tests. Do not fear them; they cause only minimal discomfort. You need to consult a qualified allergist for this. Finally, if you are one of those proactive people and are receiving allergy injections already pat yourself on the back and enjoy the spring just like anyone else!

About the author:

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