

## **Managing Seasonal Allergies at Home**



### **Understanding Seasonal Allergies**

Seasonal allergies, or allergic rhinitis, occur when your child's immune system reacts to airborne allergens like pollen. Symptoms can include:

- Sneezing
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Itchy or watery eye
- Coughing
- Fatigue



### **Limit Allergen Exposure**

- Keep windows and doors closed during high pollen seasons.
- Use air conditioning with a clean filter to help trap pollen. Avoid window fans or attic fans
- Avoid outdoor activities during peak pollen times (early morning and windy days).
- After outdoor play, have your child bathe and change into clean clothes to remove pollen.
- If you have a dog at home, avoid playing with the dog until you have washed/wiped off the pollen from the dog. Pollen collects in the fur so avoid having the dog in the bedrooms/beds.
- Encourage wearing sunglasses and hats to block pollen from eyes and hair.



### **Clean Your Home Regularly**

- Vacuum carpets and upholstered furniture weekly using a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
- Wash bedding, including pillowcases and sheets, in hot water weekly.
- Use allergen-proof covers on mattresses and pillows.
- Dust surfaces with a damp cloth to prevent allergens from becoming airborne.
- Remove pollen from the hair and skin with hair washing and a shower, especially before bedtime.
- Use a dehumidifier to keep indoor humidity levels between 30% and 50% to reduce mold and dust mites.
- Consider using a portable air purifier in your child's bedroom.



### **Use Saline Nasal Sprays**

- Saline sprays or Neti pots can help rinse allergens from the nasal passages and relieve congestion.



## Consider Over-the-Counter Medications

- Antihistamines (e.g., cetirizine/Zyrtec, loratadine/Claritin) can reduce sneezing and itching. These are the drugs of choice to control seasonal allergy symptoms and approved for ages 2 years and up. It is important to take these daily during allergy season to control symptoms.

### Claritin/Zyrtec Dosing:

Age 1-2 years ½ tsp or 2.5 mg daily. Do not take more than 5 mg in 24 hrs.

Age 2-6 years ½-1 tsp or 2.5mg-5mg daily. Do not take more than 5 mg in 24 hrs.

Age 6+ years 1-2 tsp or 5-10mg daily. Do not take more than 10 mg in 24 hrs.

- Nasal corticosteroid sprays (e.g., fluticasone/Flonase) help reduce nasal inflammation.

### Flonase Sensimist Dosing:

Age 2-11 yrs 1 spray in each nostril daily

Age 12+ years 1-2 sprays in each nostril daily. Start at 2 per 1 week, then 1



## Managing eye irritation

- Wash the pollen or other allergic substance off the face and eyelids. Apply cold compresses to relieve itching and reduce inflammation.
- Usually an antihistamine given by mouth will adequately control the allergic symptoms of the eye.
- OTC antihistamine eye drops can help with redness, itching, and irritation. Examples are Pataday, Zaditor or Alaway. These eye drops are safe and effective products.

Age: Pataday is approved for 2 years and older. The other eye drops are approved for 3 years or older

Dosage: 1 drop every 12 hours. Exception: Pataday has 2 concentrations. Patanol is every 12 hours and Pataday is every 24 hours. Follow dosage instructions on the package



## Monitor Pollen Counts

- Check local pollen forecasts to plan outdoor activities.
- On high pollen days, consider indoor activities or going outside later in the day.

## **When to Contact Your Pediatrician**

- If symptoms persist despite home management.
- If your child experiences difficulty breathing or wheezing.
- If you have concerns about medication side effects.