

The onset of seasonal allergies—seasonal allergic rhinitis—occurs with spring’s blooming season, when flowers and buds emit pollen into the air (beginning of pollination). They then continue until the first frosts.



Although they can surface at any age, they mostly affect children and young adults. They are mainly caused by exposure to tree pollen, grass, hay, and ragweed. Seasonal rhinitis should not be mistaken for annual rhinitis, which lasts throughout the year and is mainly caused by dust mites, pets, and mildew.

SYMPTOMS OF SEASONAL ALLERGIC RHINITIS

Itchy eyes, nose, and palate

Sneezing, and clear and abundant nasal discharge

Red teary eyes

Nasal congestion and headaches

Cough and shortness of breath

These symptoms vary from one year to the next. They seem to occur mostly during periods of dry heat, in the morning, and on windy days.

Since they share similar symptoms, seasonal allergic rhinitis is often mistaken for the common cold. The latter most often occurs during the winter season and triggers symptoms of sore throat, yellow mucus, and cough that disappear within 7 to 10 days.

Preventing Seasonal Allergies

Keep your doors and windows closed to avoid letting pollen in and use an air conditioner that is equipped with a filter. During pollen season,



it is best to keep your car windows closed while you drive, to change clothing after an outdoor activity, to avoid pollen-filled areas (e.g. fields), and to promptly leave locations where symptoms seem to surface. You can also use a saline solution (Salinex™) to clean congested nostrils.

Treating Seasonal Allergies

At your local pharmacy, you can obtain over-the-counter medication to alleviate the symptoms of seasonal allergic rhinitis. These drugs are mostly effective when taken before exposure to allergens.

Antihistamines

Antihistamines are sold in pill form or as children’s solution. A second generation of antihistamines (Claritin™, Allegra™, Alerius™) has been made available recently. It does not cause drowsiness or dry mouth, and can be taken only once a day, ideally at bedtime. Although considered part of the second generation, note that Cetirizine (Reactine™) can cause drowsiness.

Seasonal Allergies

To help relieve nasal congestion, products that contain a decongestant (pseudoephedrin) (Claritin™ Extra, Allegra-D™, Reactine allergy and sinus™) can be taken twice daily, if needed. People suffering from a chronic illness (heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, thyroid disorder, prostate enlargement, or closed-angle glaucoma) should not use such medication. Avoid taking pseudoephedrin before bedtime as it contains a stimulant that can disrupt sleep.

If you wish to use the first generation of antihistamines (Benadryl™, Chlor-Tripolon™) because they are less costly, pay attention to their contraindications (prostate enlargement and narrow-angle glaucoma), adverse reactions (drowsiness, dry mouth, dizziness), and dosage frequency (several times a day).

Nasal decongestants

To relieve nasal congestion, you can also use a decongestive spray (Otrivin™, Dristan™ long-lasting). However, do not use it for more than three consecutive days, even if you are still congested after three days.

Eye drops

Tearful eyes can obtain some relief through drops that are specifically designed to treat this symptom (Opticrom™).

Prescribed treatments

If symptoms persist, prescription nasal sprays can be used. It is also possible to undergo pollen desensitization through immunotherapy. Discuss it with your physician.

Consulting a Physician

You should consult a physician if any of the following apply to your situation:

- ▶ Uncertainty as to the presence of seasonal allergic rhinitis
- ▶ Uncertainty as to which allergens cause your symptoms (allergy skin test required)
- ▶ Runny nose brought on by cold or heat
- ▶ Respiratory problems such as cough or wheezing
- ▶ Intense ear pains
- ▶ Nasal congestion and intense frontal headaches
- ▶ Severe symptoms or inability to find relief through OTC medication
- ▶ The condition affects a child who is less than two years of age

Consult your pharmacist or physician to find the treatment that is right for you, in accordance to your needs and health condition, as well as contraindications and possible side effects.

For more health information, please visit
www.ida-pharmacy.ca

The information contained in this pamphlet should not be used as a substitute for medical care. Always seek the advice of your doctor before starting any treatment.

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Seasonal
Allergic
Rhinitis

If you still have questions regarding the treatment of seasonal allergic rhinitis, do not hesitate to consult your pharmacist. He can help you choose a product that is right for you and suited to your medical profile.

