



HEALTH AWARENESS

March 2024

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING SEASONAL ALLERGIES

As spring blooms and nature awakens, so do the seasonal allergies for many individuals. While Colorado's dry climate and high altitude can offer some relief for certain allergies, the state has its own unique challenges. Pollen from trees, weeds, and grasses, as well as dust mites and mold spores, are common allergens in the region and can lead to significant allergy symptoms. However, armed with knowledge and proactive measures, controlling seasonal allergies can become more manageable. Here are some effective strategies to help you navigate through the allergy season:

- 1. Identify Triggers:** Understanding your specific triggers is the first step in managing seasonal allergies. Keep track of pollen counts in your area and identify which types of pollen affect you the most.
- 2. Monitor Pollen Counts:** Stay informed about daily pollen forecasts in your area. Limit outdoor activities on high pollen days, particularly during early mornings and windy days when pollen levels tend to be higher.
- 3. Keep Windows Closed:** While it may be tempting to let in the fresh spring air, keeping windows and doors closed can help prevent pollen from entering your home. Use air conditioning with a clean filter to cool indoor air instead.
- 4. Use High-Efficiency Air Filters:** Invest in HEPA filters for your HVAC system and consider using portable air purifiers in frequently used rooms. These filters can help trap allergens, improving indoor air quality.
- 5. Practice Allergy-Proofing:** Take steps to minimize allergens in your living space. Regularly vacuum carpets, rugs, and upholstery to remove pollen and pet dander. Wash bedding frequently in hot water to eliminate allergens and consider using allergen-proof pillows and mattresses.
- 6. Nasal Irrigation:** Nasal irrigation with saline solution can help clear nasal passages and reduce symptoms such as congestion and postnasal drip. Use a neti pot or nasal spray to rinse your nasal passages with saline solution regularly.
- 7. Over-the-Counter Medications:** Antihistamines, decongestants, and nasal corticosteroids are commonly used over-the-counter medications to relieve allergy symptoms. Consult with your healthcare provider or pharmacist to determine the most suitable options for your needs.
- 8. Allergy Immunotherapy:** For individuals with severe or persistent allergies, allergy shots (immunotherapy) may be recommended. These injections gradually desensitize the immune system to specific allergens, reducing the severity of allergic reactions over time.
- 9. Natural Remedies:** Some people find relief from seasonal allergies through natural remedies such as herbal supplements, acupuncture, and dietary changes.
- 10. Stay Hydrated and Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle:** Drinking plenty of water and maintaining a balanced diet can help support your immune system and alleviate allergy symptoms.



WHAT ARE SOME COMMON ALLERGIES IN COLORADO?

Common allergy symptoms in Colorado include sneezing, a runny or stuffy nose, itchy or watery eyes, coughing, fatigue, headaches, skin rashes, shortness of breath, irritated throat, and postnasal drip. These symptoms often result from exposure to allergens such as pollen, dust, and pet dander. If you experience these symptoms, consulting an allergist is advisable for proper evaluation and effective management of your allergies in the Colorado environment.

WHEN IS ALLERGY SEASON IN COLORADO?

In Colorado, there are three primary allergy seasons, each associated with specific allergens. The tree pollen allergy season typically runs from late winter to early summer, with trees like cottonwood, aspen, elm, and juniper releasing allergenic pollen, peaking from February to May. Weed pollen allergies become prevalent in late summer and extend into fall, notably driven by ragweed, with its peak from July through September, especially in August. Grass pollen allergies can affect individuals from early spring through late summer, with the peak season occurring from May to August, primarily attributed to grasses like Kentucky bluegrass and ryegrass. However, it's essential to remember that individual experiences may vary, and the timing of these seasons can be influenced by factors such as local weather conditions and altitude.

By implementing these strategies and staying proactive in managing your seasonal allergies, you can enjoy the beauty of the Colorado seasons without the discomfort of allergic reactions. Remember to seek guidance from a healthcare professional for personalized advice and treatment options tailored to your needs. With proper management, you can minimize the impact of seasonal allergies and embrace the joys of the season to the fullest.

BENEFITS CORNER

CHP Vision Plan Benefits

Your vision benefits are provided through VSP. Enrolling on their website www.vsp.com allows you to view your plan benefits, download claims forms for out-of-network providers, and search for an in-network provider. You may also download and print a wallet-sized member ID card that explains how to use your benefits and provides a space to write down your doctor's contact information. VSP provides the following benefits:

- WellVision Exam - \$15 copay (once every 12 months)
- \$150 frame allowance (once every 24 months)
- \$170 allowance featured frame brands (once every 24 months)
- \$80 frame allowance at Costco (once every 24 months)
- 20% savings on the amount you pay over your allowance
- Contact lenses (instead of glasses) \$150 allowance (once every 12 months)
- Contact lens exam (fitting and evaluation) covered up to \$60 (once every 12 months)

For a more complete list of coverage, view the CHP Vision Benefit Summary on ctsi.org. The VSP network also offers member-only savings and an online eyewear store. Please note that you do not need a member ID card to see an eye doctor, and claim forms are not needed for in-network providers.

As always, CTSI staff is here to assist you with your health, dental, vision, or life insurance coverage. You can reach us at (303) 861-0507.

