

HEALTH

Education

Asthma & Allergies

Autumn brings a new season – summer vacations are over, the school year and football season resumes, and the trees are starting to change. In many areas of the United States, fall is the prettiest time of the year. Hay rides and pumpkin-spiced lattes return, but unfortunately for allergy sufferers, the early fall months once again bring sneezing, wheezing, and coughing.

Allergies

When our immune system identifies a harmless substance as an intruder, the brain tells the body to protect itself by sending antibodies to bind with the invasive allergen. This causes an allergic reaction to occur.

Allergies vary from person to person and can range from mild to severe. Some may be sensitive to dust mites, dander, molds, pollen and even cockroaches. During the fall months, allergy triggers tend to be associated with weed pollens and leaf mold. Common allergy symptoms that arise from these fall allergens include: nasal congestion, coughing, itchy eyes, a runny nose and sneezing.

Asthma

Recent studies have shown a connection between allergies and asthma as both affect the lungs and the airways. While allergies can be a short term issue, asthma is a more chronic condition.

Asthma symptoms can flare at any time during the year, which consist of coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and chest tightness. Due to the cooler weather, fall allergens and the beginning of the cold

and flu season, asthma sufferers may see an increase in episodes. Similarly, when people with asthma catch a cold or a virus, the illness tends to last longer with more severe effects on the respiratory tract. The infection on the respiratory tract, during an illness, can also aggravate one's chronic lung inflammation from his or her existing asthma.

Tips to Reduce Fall Allergies & Asthma Attacks

- Keep the windows closed to minimize pollen from entering your home.
- Change your HVAC air filters and consider purchasing an air purifier.
- While cleaning inside your home, use a vacuum with a HEPA filter and a damp cloth for dusting.
- Remove the leaves outside your home to help prevent a breeding ground for mold.
- Wash your hands frequently.



References:

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