

Seasonal Allergies & the Elderly



Spring is a beautiful time of year in Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati. Unfortunately, azaleas aren't the only thing blooming. Ragweed and other pollen-producing plants also return in the spring. For seniors, allergy season presents a few unique challenges. The anti-histamines most of us use to help minimize the effects of allergies are not recommended for a large number of seniors. That is because they can increase blood pressure, as well as interact with other medications they may be taking. Pollens can also aggravate existing cardiac and pulmonary conditions.

There are ways, however, that you can help the senior in your life safely survive allergy season.

They include:

- Use the air conditioning. It is sometimes difficult to convince a senior who may not be hot to use air conditioning. But keeping the windows closed helps to prevent pollens and molds from entering the house.
- Don't hang clothing or linens outside to dry. Instead, use the clothes dryer or hang them indoors to dry. Left outside, they can collect pollen, ragweed and other flying allergens.
- Keep an eye on pollen levels. That can help you plan outings for days when pollen counts are projected to be the lowest. There are several free services that will also alert you when pollen counts reach high levels. They include [The Weather Channel](#) , The [American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology](#) , and [Pollen.com](#).
- Wear sunglasses when you are outside. That can prevent pollen and other seasonal irritants from getting in to your eyes. A hat also helps prevent it from getting in to your hair and working its way on to your hands and clothing.

- Wash your hands after being outdoors. And make sure to shower as soon as you come in from working or spending any significant amount of time outside. Throw the clothes you were wearing in to the laundry. That can help prevent pollen from being spread around your house.
- Many nutritionists believe that foods that help fight inflammation can help relieve some of the symptoms of allergies. Those include apples, walnuts, flax seed, ginger, leafy green vegetables and foods rich in vitamin C.

A final word of caution if you are the caregiver for an elderly loved one in the Covington area. Be sure your loved one's primary care physician is aware of their allergy struggles. If they have multiple health issues it may be easy to overlook them. They may want to order an allergy test to determine what the exact cause of the allergy is so they can help to treat it better.

Are you a spring allergy sufferer? Do you have any advice to share on organic ways to treat allergies?

Provided by: www.stcharlescommunity.org

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