



AIM FOR HEALTH & FITNESS

SPRING 2018

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TIPS FOR SPRINGTIME ALLERGIES

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Use Filter Masks When Mowing the Lawn

Instead of just putting up with the allergic reaction, you can take steps to avoid the pollen from irritating you. Filter masks when mowing the lawn are the perfect option. They allow you to breathe but have small enough holes that prevent the pollen getting through. The irritants collect on the outside, and you are left breathing cleaner air.

Get Allergy Medication Early

Take the medication as early as one week before the spring season. Unlike other medications, taking antihistamines as a preventative method instead of a treatment has shown positive results. It can take the medications a day or two to start working. By taking them early, you give them the chance to work effectively from the beginning.

Consider Building Up Your Resistance

Your doctor may be able to give you a treatment that works like a vaccine. It helps you build up your resistance to the pollen, by injecting some of the pollen into your body. Your immune system has a chance to recognize it and work against it.

Consider Natural Relief Against the Allergies

If you are not too sure about using allergy medications, consider opting for natural relief. Do keep in mind that natural does not always mean it is going to be safe. Some natural ingredients can react with other medications you take. Always talk to your doctor before you consider the alternative options.

Invest in the Right Vacuum Cleaner

While you will know vacuuming is important to get rid of pollen and dust mites, you need to get the right type of vacuum cleaner. You want one that has a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. While vacuums will pick up the dust and the dirt, it is the filter that helps to prevent the spread of microscopic particles within the air.

WHY IS FLU SEASON SO BAD THIS YEAR?

Different strains of influenza circulate each year. This year, influenza A — specifically H3N2 — is especially prevalent, according to the CDC. In years with predominantly H3 viruses, according to the CDC, the country tends to see more serious cases of the flu, especially in young children and elderly adults, as well as decreased vaccine effectiveness, resulting in more total infections and more hospitalizations.

Is the flu vaccine working?

The flu shot is tweaked each year in an attempt to target what are projected to be the most prevalent strains of the disease, but the process isn't foolproof. The CDC estimates that the vaccine will be effective against roughly 30% of H3 viruses this year.

That said, the CDC still recommends that you get vaccinated if you haven't already, as there could be as many as 13 weeks of flu season still to come. Plus, the shot may protect against influenza B strains, which typically come out later in the season.

How can you prevent the flu?

Getting the flu shot and staying home if you're sick are two of the most important ways to reduce transmission. But the CDC says it's also important to wash your hands frequently, cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze and wipe down surfaces that may have come into contact with contagion, as flu germs can live on them for up to 24 hours.

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