SNEEZE GAZETTE™

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Summertime Blues

Dealing With Summertime Allergies and Asthma

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Summertime is upon us! Sunny skies, long lazy afternoons out in the yard, running barefoot in the grass. OK, those with allergy symptoms know that weeds, mites, mold, and grass are all summertime allergens. So maybe you're not lazing about in the grass watching the dragonflies flit.

But you don't have to hide inside and be blue while everyone else takes full advantage of the short sweet summer season! You just need to be prepared, starting with faithful use of any prescribed nasal steroids, which have been shown to treat allergy symptoms. Prescription eye drops like Pataday™ or Bepreve™ block the allergic pathway and help keep itchy, watery eyes calm so that you can actually see the dragonflies. Or firef;ies. Avoid over-the-counter eye drops though. If over-the-counter eye drops are used continuously, they often have a rebound effect resulting in worsening of nose and eye symptoms

If you are traveling to an urban area, or live in a city, summertime haze means poor air quality. Pollutants such as ozone, automobile emissions, and factory exhaust will worsen asthma and allergy symptoms. Take your controller asthma medication like Singulair™ (montelukast) every day. And remember to use inhaled steroids for asthma and nasal steroid for inhalant allergy. These medications have been demonstrated to be effective in helping those individuals with allergy and asthma in urban areas.

Athletes and those of us who exercise regularly are particularly affected by poor air quality. Pay special attention to make sure all medications are taken regularly. Be sure to pack that nasal spray and asthma medication and have your rescue medications (albuterol and oral steroids) ready when planning a trip to an urban area and you'll leave allergy and asthma troubles at home!

Once you are outside soaking up the sun, whether city streets or country trails, eczema may worsen or skin conditions such as contact dermatitis caused by environmental factors like poison ivy can be more frequent in summer. Have your moisturizers, topical steroid ointments, antihistamines and even oral steroids available. And of course, avoiding contact with 'leaves of three' is the best preventative. Watch your step while watching the birds.

And when you finally return from your outdoor summertime adventures, wherever they take you, remember that your home is your respite from the allergens outside. Keep windows closed and run air conditioners whenever possible to minimize chance the chance that pollen will make its way indoors. Maintain plastic coverings on bedding to protect against dust mite. Use a dehumidifier in damp areas and basements to guard against mold. HEPA air filtration is effective against mold as well, and helps keep animal dander at bay, too.

Enjoy your summer!
Be prepared for summertime allergy and asthma symptoms.

Being well prepared for allergy and asthma conditions will make for a happy and healthy summer. Don't miss a thing outdoors! We are always available to help you manage your summertime allergy and asthma questions and problems. Have a happy and healthy summer!

By Christopher Randolph, MD

and Lisa Wall

For Pollen Counts in the Greater Waterbury area and more,

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