



GLOBAL HEALTH PHARMACY

ASK YOUR GLOBAL HEALTH PHARMACIST

News from your Global Health Education center

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CHILDREN AND ALLERGIES

When Children's Allergies Strike in the Fall:

School is in session, and just like clockwork your child or children starts sneezing, sniffing and snorting – not to mention clearing their throat and blowing their noses like there's no tomorrow. What's going on?

Chances are it's allergies – the immune system's abnormal reaction to substances that would normally be quite harmless. Up to 40 percent of children in the U. S. have nasal allergies.

How can you know for sure whether allergies are the culprit? One way is to have your child see a pediatrician, who may find clues in places like nasal mucous membranes. But the only way to identify specific triggers is to do allergy testing.

Outdoors allergens:

It is also known as hay fever. Seasonal allergies often bring images of springtime sufferers. This is most common when many plants begin to bloom or grass is being cut. In the Fall, outdoor allergens such as ragweed and tumbleweed may also release tiny pollen and wreak major havoc – especially in the morning.

Indoor allergens:

But that's not normal. In the Fall, your child/children begins spending more time inside at school and at home. That's why many indoor allergens may then also rear their ugly heads. Some examples are:

- 1) Animal allergens such as fur, feathers, or saliva
- 2) Dust mite, a microscopic insect that lives in bedding, sofa, and carpets
- 3) Latex in rubber gloves, toys, or balloons, as well as in the elastic found in clothing
- 4) Mold
- 5) Clothing and toys made of or stuffed with animal hairs

Avoiding triggers:

You or your child/children don't have a lot of control over indoor allergens at home, school, office or work place. But there certainly are precautions you can take to protect yourself and your child/children. Some of those steps include:

- 1) Replace pillows every 2 to 3 years
- 2) Take steps to reduce mold growth at home. Fixing leaky plumbing, and removing and replacing bathroom carpets can control indoor humidity.



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- 3) Use air conditioners and keep windows closed in the car and at home to reduce exposure to pollen
- 4) Vacuum upholstered furniture and wash linens weekly and other bedding every 1 to 2 weeks in hot water
- 5) Encase pillows, mattresses, and comforters in special covers that keep dust mites out
- 6) Limit stuffed animals in the bedroom.
- 7) Have your child/children avoid playing in piles of dead leaves if mold allergies are a problem

Avoiding triggers is the best way to prevent the symptoms of allergies. But keep in mind that it can take three to six months to see an improvement in symptoms once indoor triggers are removed.

Talk time:

Sometimes avoiding triggers is not enough to control symptoms. Before you stock up on loads of over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, stop by and have a talk with your Global Health Pharmacist. Your Global Health Pharmacist can help select the right products for your allergies and guide you on their uses. You can also have a conversation with your child/children's pediatrician. Sometimes allergy testing or prescription medications are needed to bring relief.

Nothing herein constitutes medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, or is a substitute for professional advice. You should always seek the advice of your physician or other medical professional if you have questions or concerns about a medical condition.

References:

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- 2) HealthDay: easing Your Child's Allergies. Available at: <https://www.medlineplus.gov/news/fullstory/1559389.html> Accessed 7-31-16