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ALLERGY – POLLENS

During the early months of spring the trees and grasses begin their pollination. Tiny particles are released into the air and cause the first symptoms of “hay fever”. In late fall, the dreaded ragweeds and other weed pollens cause many allergy sufferers to have their greatest increase in symptoms. Some pollens are visible while others are not. The most common allergenic pollens are those that are airborne such as trees, grasses and weeds. Most flowers are pollinated by insects and are generally not offensive to the allergic individual. However, any pollen has the potential to cause symptoms upon exposure.

The most common symptoms of pollen allergy are itchy, swollen, red or watery eyes, clear watery nasal mucus or sneezing and nasal itching. Itching is a key symptom of allergy. Your nose may itch as well as your throat or ears. These symptoms are often worse outdoors and diminish inside.

People who suffer from pollen allergies find the greatest relief in an air-conditioned area. Pollen allergic individuals should avoid sleeping in a room with open windows. The pollen count is the highest between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 a.m., so special attention should be given to outdoor activities during these hours. If outdoor activity is unavoidable, a filtered mask should be worn. Allergy patients who have symptoms increase due to outdoor exposure, will benefit from showering and changing into fresh clothing.

During pollen season it is advisable to follow a diet that eliminates the concomitant foods. A concomitant food reacts with the allergen causing greater symptoms. During pollen season some foods that should be avoided are grains, melons, bananas and milk. The doctor may recommend that you avoid certain foods also. Your diet should consist of fresh fruit, vegetables and fresh meats. Consider increasing your intake of Vitamin C enriched foods, as this may bolster your immune system.

Common Pollen Sources:

Trees: (Early Spring) – Maple, Oak, Birch, Mountain Cedar, Walnut, Pine, Hickory and Elm.

Grasses: (Spring-Summer) – Bermuda, June, Fescue, Rye, Orchard, Timothy and Johnson.

Weeds: (Late Summer-Fall) – English Plantain, Lamb’s Quarters, Dock, Pigweed and Mugwort.

Ragweed: (September-First Frost) – Common (short), Western, Giant and False.

Note: This is a list of the more common allergens and is by no means complete.

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