

Taking care of your allergies

Many people have allergies. Signs often include sneezing and sniffles. You also may have a stuffy nose. Your eyes may be itchy or watery. Or, you may have a headache. Common causes include dust and animal dander. They also can include pollen from grass, trees or flowers. You may have signs year-round. Or, you may only have them at certain times of the year. How can you find relief?

You can run but you can't hide

Allergy triggers are everywhere. You may not be able to avoid them all. But, these tips can help:

- Stay inside when the pollen count is high.
- Keep windows closed. Use air-conditioning when you can. Change filters often.
- Vacuum often. On bare floors, use rugs that can be washed.
- Pollen gets on your pets' fur. Bathe pets often. Better yet, have someone else bathe them. Don't allow pets in your bedroom.
- Put zippered plastic covers on mattresses and pillows.

Help for your allergies

Some medicines can make your allergies feel better. Your doctor may give you a prescription. Or, you may pick one from the drugstore shelf. Always talk with

your doctor. He or she can tell you about what's right for you.

Allergy medicines sometimes have side effects. They may make you sleepy or nervous. You may be told not to drive or use machinery. Read the label. Pay close attention to any warnings. Always follow what your doctor says.

Home care tips when allergies hit

- Drink adequate amounts of fluids each day.
- Avoid smoke and other things that make you feel worse.
- When you lie down, keep your head raised on pillows. It will help your sinuses drain.
- Ask your doctor about taking medicine. If it's OK, take it when you first start to feel sick. Don't wait until you feel really bad.
- Allergies can make you feel tired. Try to rest as needed.

Talk with your doctor about other steps you can take. Some people may benefit from warm, humid air. It can help keep nasal passages moist. Others may do better with air that's less humid. This includes those who are allergic to dust mites or mold. Find out what's best for you.

Remember, registered nurses are available to answer your health questions 24 hours every day.

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