



Avoiding Allergies

With the fresh Spring breeze, allergies and asthma remind us of the importance of clean air. Allergies are diseases of the immune system that cause an overreaction to substances called “allergens.” Allergies are grouped by the kind of trigger, time of year or where symptoms appear on the body: indoor and outdoor allergies (also called “hay fever,” “seasonal,” “perennial” or “nasal” allergies), food and drug allergies, latex allergies, insect allergies, skin allergies and eye allergies.

People who have allergies can live healthy and active lives. While there are no sure ways to prevent allergies or asthma, there are ways to reduce reactions or “attacks”:

- Avoid common irritants and pollutants – tobacco smoke, car exhaust, hair spray, and perfume.
- Wash hair at night, before going to bed, to prevent pollen from settling on pillows and bedding.
- Stay inside when pollen counts are high.
- Avoid eating problem foods (those that trigger your symptoms).
- Consider whether pets are triggering your allergies or asthma.
- Wash bedding weekly in hot water – using special mattress and pillow covers can help too.
- Keep carpets vacuumed and rooms clean.
- Use air conditioning and dehumidifiers inside your home, and make sure you have efficient ventilation.

For more information, contact the Allergy and Asthma Network at 800.878.4403 or the Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America at www.aafa.org.

