

Spring Allergies

As spring arrives across Canada, many people begin to experience seasonal allergies. According to the Canadian Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Foundation, roughly one in four to five Canadians is affected by hay fever, with symptoms like sneezing, congestion, and itchy, watery eyes.

Dr. Vera Kohut explains that spring allergens are triggered as plants, trees, and grass begin to grow, releasing pollen into the air. Melting snow can also contribute.

“We have snow mould, a fungus, which is sitting in cool, damp areas, and now that the snow is melting away it’s capable of becoming airborne as the weather gets warmer,” she said. “Trees are starting to sprout ... all these things are starting to open up.”

Simple steps can help limit exposure:

- Check daily pollen counts through weather services
- Change clothes and wash your face after being outdoors
- Keep windows closed on high-pollen days

For treatment, over-the-counter options include antihistamines, saline rinses, and decongestant sprays. These can help manage symptoms like congestion and irritation. Saline rinses (such as neti pots) can also clear pollen from nasal passages.

For ongoing or severe allergies, longer-term treatments may help. These include allergy shots or sublingual immunotherapy, which gradually build tolerance to specific allergens.

“Over time, you become more tolerant,” Kohut explained. “And that tolerance will give you a decreased reactivity to those pollens.” She also emphasizes the importance of identifying specific triggers to guide treatment.

Source:

1. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/article/an-expert-shares-how-to-reduce-allergy-symptoms-this-spring/>

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