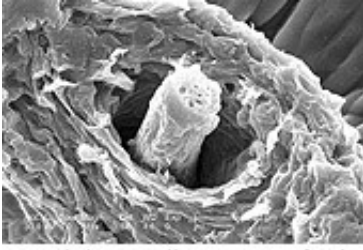


Nip springtime allergies in the bud

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Dandelion pollen, magnified 811x. Source: US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

It's easier to prevent allergic symptoms than stop them, expert says.

(HealthDay)—The spring allergy season is off to an early start and allergy sufferers need to take action to prevent symptoms, an expert says.

"If you start after the symptoms are in full swing, it's much harder to stop the allergic reaction than to prevent it from the beginning," Dr. David Rosenstreich, director of the allergy and immunology division at Montefiore Medical Center in New York City, said in a center news release.

Symptoms of seasonal allergies, commonly referred to as hay fever, include itchy eyes, nose and throat; sneezing; stuffy or runny nose; tearing up; and dark circles under the eyes.

"In the early spring, trees are the first to start producing pollen as soon as

they start budding, and it creates major problems for people with allergies," Rosenstreich said. "The symptoms people experience often resemble a common cold, but, if it happens every year at this time, it's most likely allergies."

In addition to medications, [lifestyle changes](#) can help relieve hay fever symptoms. These measures include:

- Limiting outdoor activities when [pollen counts](#) are high.
- Leaving windows closed at home or in the car to keep pollen out.
- Installing and using your air conditioner early, to filter the outside air that comes into your home.
- Washing your hair after being outside.
- Avoiding mowing lawns or raking leaves, both of which stir up pollen and mold.
- Not hanging sheets or clothes outside to dry.

"There's no reason for people with allergies to suffer," Rosenstreich said. "As long as you take the proper precautions, you should be able to enjoy the outdoors and make the most of the [warm weather](#)."

About 35 million Americans have allergies, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more about [hay fever](#).

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