

Keeping the holidays allergy and asthma-free

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(HealthDay)—Allergies and asthma can be worse than the Grinch when it comes to ruining your holiday spirit.

"People may not want to admit their allergies and [asthma](#) interfere with their holiday fun, but the truth is, symptoms can occur any time of the year," said Dr. Bradley Chipps, president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.

"If you keep in mind some simple tips, you can prepare yourself—and your nose and eyes—for [allergy](#) symptoms that may crop up during the holidays," he said in a news release from the organization.

First of all, protect yourself from the flu by getting a [flu shot](#) and washing your hands regularly and thoroughly.

People with asthma need to remember that very cold, dry air can trigger [asthma symptoms](#). So if you have asthma, cover your mouth and nose with a scarf or face mask when you're outside. That's especially true if you're exercising. Or, consider exercising indoors during cold weather.

Real Christmas trees can have [mold spores](#) and pollen on them, which can trigger nasal allergies. Their sap can also cause contact skin allergies in some people. What to do? Rinse off live trees before bringing them into your home. And, even if your tree is artificial, clean it—and all decorations—before use because they, too, can gather dust and mold.

Food allergies can also pose problems during the holiday season.

The best advice is to alert hosts to any food allergies you or others in your family have—and consider taking a dish or dishes to parties to be sure they'll be something that's safe for you. If you're hosting, let your guests know what dishes you plan to serve.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers [holiday health and safety tips](#).

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