

ALLERGIES

INFORMATION AND PREVENTION

Allergens

Dust mites and ragweed and trees, oh my! Summer is in full swing in Florida – and those whom suffer from allergies of all kinds don't need to be reminded. The signs are as close as the box of tissues the afflicted keeps nearby. Below is information that just might help minimize the effects. The best way to avoid allergies is to recognize them:

Signs of Allergies

- Sneezing, watery eyes or cold symptoms that last 10 days without a fever.
- Repeated ear and sinus infections.
- Loss of smell or taste.
- Frequent or constant throat clearing, hoarseness, coughing or wheezing.
- Dark circles under the eyes (also know as allergic shiners).
- A crease above the tip of the nose from constant upward wiping.
- Headaches/pressure behind eyes and forehead.

Allergens & Irritants

- Cigarette Smoke contains a number of toxic chemicals and irritants.
- Cockroaches are one of the most common and allergenic of indoor pests.
- Dust Mites are tiny microscopic relatives of the spider and live on bedding, upholstered furniture.

- Food Allergies are most common to: egg, milk, shellfish, peanuts, soy and wheat.
- Grass Pollen is regional as well as seasonal. Grass pollen levels can be affected by temperature, time of day and rain.
- House Dust is not just dirt but a mixture of potentially allergenic materials.
- Mold Spores are found indoor in: dark, warm, humid and musty areas. Outdoor: mostly in shady areas.
- Pets and Animal allergies are caused by the dander and proteins in saliva.
- Ragweed and other weeds are some of the most prolific producers of pollen allergens.
- Tree Pollen is released and can be found miles from original source.

Sinus Headache Facts

According to the American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery, sinus headaches are associated with a swelling of the membranes lining the sinuses. Pain occurs in the affected region - the result of air, pus, and mucus being trapped within the obstructed sinuses. The discomfort often occurs under the eye and in the upper teeth (disguised as a headache or toothache). Sinus headaches tend to worsen as you bend forward or lie down.

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How Many Americans Suffer From Sinus Headaches?

Four out of every 10 adults are stricken with sinus headaches. "Nearly one-fourth of sinus headache sufferers say the painful condition affects every aspect of their lives, including their appearance."

Is a Headache Always a Sinus Headache?

No. Some people experience headaches unrelated to sinusitis, which could actually be a tension headache, migraine, or cluster headache. In a surprise finding from a study conducted by the Headache Care Center in Springfield, Mo., it was revealed that 90 percent of patients who have self-diagnosed sinus headache and even those with a physician diagnosis of sinus headache, actually met established criteria for the diagnosis of migraine.

PREVENTION

Often people confuse allergies with a cold or flu. Remember – colds are short-lived and pass from person to person. Allergies are immune system reactions to normally harmless substances. Avoiding exposures to allergens best prevents allergies. A good first step to avoiding allergens is to follow the various PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES outlined below.

- Cigarette smoke – don't smoke and if you do, quit.
- Cockroaches – secure food indoors and out. Use safe pesticides.
- Dust mites – Keep relative humidity at 50%. Wash bedding in HOT water.
- Food allergies – Learn to read food labels carefully; ask when dining out.
- Grass and Ragweed – avoid the outdoors between 5 AM and 10 AM. Keep windows closed.

- House dust - remove dust with damp mop or rag.
- Mold spores – use a dehumidifier.
- Pets – you may have to remove pets from the home. Bathe pet weekly. Wash hands and clothes to remove allergens.
- Trees – only 100 trees are shown to cause allergies. Avoid planting those trees in your yard. Avoid outdoors during the hours of 5 AM – 10 AM.

Want to Learn More?

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Sources: National Institute of Health; Asthma & Allergy Prevention NIEHS

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