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Allergies and Asthma – Tips to Stop the Sneezing

Many of us struggle through spring, when seasonal allergies are at their worst. But did you know that autumn can pose similar problems for the allergy-prone? As we head into winter, furnaces circulate allergens, molds emit spores and some plants, and pollen producers like ragweed are pollinating.

According to Statistics Canada, asthma is one of the most common causes of emergency department visits in Canada. 12% of children and 8% of adults are estimated to have asthma which represents approximately 2.5 million Canadians.

Research out of Australia is looking at the effect of a drug currently used to treat rheumatoid arthritis and its impact on asthma. There is hope that the drug, tocilizumab, used in the study may have a future in asthma treatment.

What can you do to manage your allergies and asthma? Here are my top 5 tips:

Loose the Allergens

Avoid the outdoors between 10 am & 4 pm, or keep the windows and doors shut to preserve your indoor air free of allergy triggers. Use special air filters for your furnace and air conditioning systems to help eliminate particles from your indoor air.

Wash Away Allergens

Taking a shower and changing your clothes will help wash away any allergens that come inside from the outdoors. Leave your shoes at the door to help impede allergens – so you aren't tracking allergens through your home.

Boost Your Vitamin D

Recent studies show that not enough vitamin D may also cause allergy symptoms or make them worse. We've talked about the importance of vitamin D in earlier – that it's important to access vitamin D from fish oils and fatty fish or supplements to make sure it's part of your diet.

Drink More Fluids

Water, juice and other fluids can help you relieve congestion and postnasal drip from your allergies, try drinking more water, juice, or other fluids. Hot liquids, like tea, broth or soup can also help thin the mucus in your nasal passages and may offer some relief.

Get To Know Your Triggers

Making an appointment with an allergist for an allergy skin test can help identify your triggers. Once you've been tested ... avoid your triggers.

A recent study indicates that more than half of asthmatics don't have their asthma under control. Most people don't recognize the severity of their symptoms and have neglected to create a plan for medications better manage and gain control on your asthma.

In my experience, gaining insight into your triggers is the best way to create a plan to avoid them. Talk to your pharmacist to examine your needs and how you can develop an action plan that is right for you.