



May 12th, 2014

May is Allergy & Asthma Awareness Month

Did you know 1 in 5 Canadians suffers from respiratory allergies such as rhinitis and about 3 million Canadians have asthma?

If you suffer from asthma or allergies, there's a very good chance that you are sensitive to dust mites. These minute critters live in mattresses, pillows, bedding and, even, stuffed toys. To limit your exposure, wash bedding and stuffed toys at least once weekly in hot water and dry them on a hot setting. Encase mattresses and pillows in specialized covers. Forgo carpets, curtains & other "soft" touches and vacuum with a HEPA filter & damp dust to reduce stirred-up allergens.

Can what you eat reduce your symptoms?

Researchers from Harvard Medical School have found that foods containing phytoestrogens, such as soybeans or flaxseed, may reduce the symptoms of asthma and allergies – up to 19 percent reduction for asthma and 29 percent for allergies. They were quick to point out, however, that just eating these foods may not produce the desired effects. They are hoping the information leads to new, effective medications and treatments. Stay tuned!

Can having an itchy, runny nose be a good thing?

Does spring bring to mind thoughts of itching, running nose? If so, you probably suffer from allergic rhinitis. As irritating as this condition can be, you can take heart in information presented at this year's American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology conference in San Diego. Those with allergic rhinitis live longer with a 26 percent lower risk of heart attack, 19 percent lower risk of stroke and 49 percent lower risk of any death! They don't know why, yet, but it's something!

Can you have a dog when you live with allergies?

Is there such a thing as a hypoallergenic dog breed? The current research is suggesting not. A study out of Detroit, Michigan, compared 60 breeds, including 11 considered hypoallergenic, and found no significant difference in the allergen dust levels (dander, fur) in homes where they were measured. So, while those Malteses and schnauzers are very cute, there's no scientific reason they should be the pet of choice for those suffering from allergies.

May is Allergy and Asthma Awareness Month. Fortunately, these are both conditions with many treatment options and strategies. Your pharmacist may have special training to help you manage these conditions. Talk to them!