

Tips for surviving a HIGH-POLLEN SEASON

By **STEVE DORFMAN**

Even as we pay homage this week to our planet, we must acknowledge that Mother Earth can sometimes be less than kind to her children — especially those who suffer with allergies.

As people with pollen-based allergies know, this season has been particularly troublesome.

"In previous years, pollens in the air have been low for a variety of reasons," explains **Dr. Walter Ryan**, an allergy specialist at **West Boca Medical Center**. "But this year, increased rainfall has contributed to an increase in the production of pollen — and, thus, to many people's suffering."

Pollen is released in the morning, so allergy symptoms usually peak then. Plus, pollen's effects are exacerbated on windy days.

So if this spring has brought you more sneezing, itchy eyes and runny noses, here are a few suggestions to allay your symptoms:

1. **KEEP ALL WINDOWS CLOSED** and use the A/C in your home and car.
2. **TRY TO STAY INDOORS IN THE MORNING**. Plan outdoor activities for the afternoon and evening. "You can track the day's pollen levels using Web sites such as aaaai.org, Florida-Allergy.com, pollen.com or weather.com," says Ryan.
3. **SHOWER AND CHANGE CLOTHES OFTEN ON HIGH-POLLEN DAYS**. "And never hang clothes outside to dry on high-pollen days," Ryan adds.
4. **TRY A PRE-EMPTIVE NASAL TREATMENT**. Dr. Bruce Berenson of Delray Medical Center suggests "washing out your nostrils with a nasal saline solution prior to entering an allergen-heavy environment."
5. **TREAT SEVERE SYMPTOMS WITH MEDICATION** — both over-the-counter and prescribed by medical professionals. "You can try antihistamines and nasal steroids," recommends Berenson.

He adds, "Medications such as Singulair, Astelin, Flonase, Nasonex, Rhinocort, Omnaris or Veramyst might be effective. Also, consider allergy shots from your doctor."

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