

# Coping with Seasonal Allergies During the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Tips from Allergist & Immunologist Dr. Jennifer Camacho



Allergy season is officially here. This can cause a little confusion when determining if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or if you are in fact suffering from seasonal allergies. Pesky allergy symptoms typically include sneezing, a runny or stuffy nose and watery, itchy, red or swollen eyes. Allergies affect millions of Americans and can impact your quality of life.

Even the slightest symptoms can put people on high alert. It's important to know allergy symptoms differ from COVID-19 or a viral infection. COVID-19, or Coronavirus causes, fever, cough and shortness of breath.

While everyone is hunkering down inside, it's still important to get outside for fresh air but remember to practice social distancing guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

You don't have to suffer from season allergies - follow these tips to get relief:

### Identify your allergy triggers

It's important to determine what is causing your symptoms and optimize your treatment plan. A simple blood or skin test, which pricks a small dose of the allergen under the skin, can screen for dozens of common allergens.

### Rinse your sinuses

This is an easy way to relieve a stuffy nose while at home. Common devices such as a Neti pot is used as an irrigation device that is filled with saline solution and poured into the nasal cavity. This can provide short-term relief and is more effective when used in conjunction with other medications.

### Take your medication regularly and do not wait for symptoms to start

Avoid playing catch up with your medications and start taking them as soon as the season starts regardless if you're experiencing any symptoms. You should continue to take your medication even if your symptoms have lessened.

### Use an air purifier

An air purifier does just that - it removes contaminants such as pollen, dust, even smoke from the air. Also, keeping the windows shut can reduce the amount of allergens that come inside.

### Allergy shots

Those with severe allergies can benefit from immunotherapy or allergy shots. Allergy shots contain small amounts of the allergen you are sensitive to. Over time, as you're more and more exposed to these allergens, it will desensitize your body to the allergen and reduce your overall symptoms.

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