

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

450 Laurel Street, Suite 1400, Baton Rouge, LA 70801

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Fuselier / Crystal Carter

Phone: 225/346-6883

FAX: 225/344-1132

Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients about Seasonal Allergies

With winter in Louisiana coming to a close, temperatures are rising, the sun is shining, and flowers are beginning to bloom. Spring weather means enjoying more time outdoors, whether at sporting events, hunting, or enjoying a family barbecue. For many patients, spring weather also means sneezing, coughing, and other symptoms that characterize seasonal allergies.

Seasonal allergies may begin as early as February and last through late summer. As Louisiana residents, we often experience milder winters and rainy springs that cause plants to pollinate early and grow quickly. One of the most common triggers of seasonal allergies is pollen. Pollen from trees, weeds, and grasses causes most seasonal allergic reactions. Ragweed is one of the main culprits of seasonal allergies, along with sagebrush, pigweed, and lamb's quarters. Birch, oak, and cedar trees are also highly allergenic, whereas roses and flowering trees do not typically cause allergic reactions.

Symptoms of seasonal pollen allergies include: runny nose, sore throat, sneezing, itchiness, stuffy nose, red and watery eyes, and swelling around the eyes. Patients with seasonal allergies will only experience these symptoms when the particular pollens they are allergic to are in the air.

The best approach to combating seasonal pollen allergies is to know what triggers symptoms. Recognizing what makes seasonal allergies better or worse can help prevent allergic symptoms. There are various ways to prevent and reduce allergic symptoms. Local weather forecasts often report how much pollen is in the air during pollen season, and on days that the pollen count is high, limiting time outdoors can help. Keeping windows in the car and home closed, using central air conditioning with a HEPA filter attachment, and limiting close contact with outdoor pets can also reduce exposure to pollen. Before bed, bathe and shampoo hair to eliminate pollen from hair and skin and keep it off your bedding. Washing bedding in hot, soapy water once a week is also recommended.

If someone has a history of seasonal allergies, allergists recommend beginning medications two weeks before they are expected to experience symptoms. There are a variety of medications used to control and treat allergic symptoms, many of which are offered over-the-counter. One or more of the following treatments may be used to alleviate symptoms:

- **Nose rinses** use salt water to clean inside the nose and remove pollen.
- **Steroid nose sprays** are the most effective medication for allergic rhinitis, because they reduce inflammation, block allergic reactions, and ease symptoms.
- **Antihistamines** can reduce itching, sneezing, and runny nose symptoms.
- **Decongestants** decrease stuffy nose symptoms. Nasal decongestant nose sprays should not be used more than 3 days. Decongestants may be inappropriate for some patients, including those with high blood pressure. Patients should talk to their pharmacist and health care provider before using decongestants.

Some patients may not experience full relief from allergic symptoms with these medications. If so, patients should talk with their health care provider about allergy shots or under-the-tongue allergy pills as treatment options. Prevention and management of seasonal allergies can be achieved with trigger avoidance, treatment of symptoms, and discussion with your health care provider.

References:

<http://www.aafa.org/page/pollen-allergy.aspx>

<http://acaai.org/allergies/seasonal-allergies>

<https://www-uptodate-com.ulm.idm.oclc.org/contents/search>

Author:

Kelsey Dearman

PharmD Candidate 2018

University of Louisiana at Monroe School of Pharmacy

The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the

**LPA and its benefits, contact Julie Fuselier or Phyllis Perron, LPA Co-Executive
Directors at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at www.louisianapharmacists.com.**

###