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Seasonal Allergies



Treating your Allergies with Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medications

Spring is right around the corner, and for some people, so are allergies. There are many different over-the-counter allergy medications. Here are some tips to help you find the right medication to treat your seasonal allergy symptoms.

First, identify your allergy symptoms and know what will treat them:

- Sneezing, itching, runny nose or watery eyes? Try an antihistamine like loratadine (Claritin) or cetirizine (Zyrtec). Older antihistamines, like diphenhydramine (Benadryl), are effective but cause more drowsiness than newer antihistamines.
- Nasal stuffiness or congestion? A decongestant, like pseudoephedrine (Sudafed), is available behind the pharmacy counter and can help relieve the congestion, but should not be used if you have high blood pressure. Saline nasal spray (Ocean Nasal) is a good alternative if you do have high blood pressure.
- Both stuffy and runny? Products that contain both an antihistamine and decongestant are available. Try Claritin-D or Zyrtec-D, available behind the pharmacy counter.



Start taking these medications before your symptoms begin. They work the best when you take them every day, not just when you feel like you need them. If these over-the-counter medications do not help your allergy symptoms, call your doctor. They may have you try a prescription medication to treat your allergies.

Stifle the Sniffles



While medications are great for reducing symptoms, people who have allergies can help to relieve some of their symptoms by following these simple and natural tricks to the right. Combining these strategies along with an allergy medication can be very effective.

Drink warm tea to sooth sore throats and open sinuses.

Stay inside (especially mid-morning) to avoid allergens.

Use saline nasal sprays to relieve congestion.

Stay hydrated and drink lots of water.

Air condition your home and keep windows closed.

Try a cold compress to help relieve itchy eyes.

Tired of paying for



You can try Accolate (Zafirlukast) for free. Accolate is a similar medication to Singulair. Accolate recently lost its patent and became available generically, meaning it has a \$0 copay at preferred pharmacies. Accolate does have to be taken twice a day, and would require a new prescription from your doctor. For more information, or help contacting your doctor, contact your pharmacy advocate, Dr. Chris Williams cwilliams@manateeyourchoice.com (941)-748-4501 Ext. 6406

Spicy foods can thin mucus and clear nasal passages.

A hot shower or bath can relieve congestion.

Don't rub itchy eyes. This only irritates them.

A dab of petroleum jelly can sooth a raw nose.

Avoid milky foods which can make mucus worse.

Gargling with warm salt water can ease sore throats.

Treat Your Symptoms and Feel Better Faster

Feeling down because of your allergy symptoms? Whether you have an occasional runny nose or are a frequent sneezer, many medications can decrease your symptoms and make you feel better. The two charts below list some commonly used allergy medications. The first chart lists medications that you can find over the counter and the second contains drugs that can only be obtained with a prescription from your doctor.

Over the Counter (OTC) Treatment

Symptoms	Medication	Dosage Form	Side Effects/ Precautions	Notes
Itching, Sneezing, Rashes, and Runny Nose	Diphenhydramine (Benadryl); Clemastine (Tavist); Chlorpheniramine (Chlor-Trimeton)	Pill	May cause drowsiness	
	Cetirizine (Zyrtec)	Pill		Treats indoor and outdoor allergies
	Loratidine (Claritin, Alavert)	Pill		Non-drowsy
	Fexofenadine (Allegra)	Pill	Apple, grapefruit, and orange juice can decrease effectiveness	Now Available Over The Counter!
Anti-inflammatory and allergen blocker	Cromolyn (Nasal crom)	Nasal Spray	May take up to 3 weeks to work	Good for mild allergies and can be used while pregnant
Congestion	Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed)	Pill	Nervousness, insomnia, and heart palpitations	Must request medication at the pharmacy counter.
	Phenylephrine			
Itchy Eyes	Zaditor	Eye Drops	Burning, stinging, or dryness of eye	Administration may be difficult with limited hand mobility.
	Alaway			

Prescription Treatment

Symptoms	Medication	Dosage Form	Side Effects/ Precautions/ Notes
Itching, Sneezing, Rashes, and Runny Nose	Azelastine (Astelin)	Nasal Spray	Some drowsiness, dry mouth and nose
	Olopatadine (Patanase)		
	Desloratidine (Clarinex)	Pill	Stronger and lasts longer than Claritin
Inflammation in moderate to severe allergic rhinitis	Triamcinolone (Nasacort)	Nasal Spray	Dryness, burning, and stinging in the nasal passage; Sneezing
	Mometasone (Nasonex)		
	Fluticasone (Flonase)		
	Budesonide (Rhinocort)		
Airway constriction and mucus production	Montelukast (Singulair)	Pill	Possible behavior and mood changes. Good for allergy-related asthma
	Zafirlukast (Accolate)		
Runny Nose	Ipratropium bromide (Atrovent)	Nasal Spray	Nasal dryness, nosebleeds, and sore throat
Itchy Eyes	Alex	Eye Drops	Burning, stinging, or dryness of eye
	Patanol		

Did you know that Manatee has a \$0 copay for Allegra, Zyrtec, or Claritin if you have a prescription from your doctor? Manatee also covers Zaditor and Alaway eye drops as an alternative to many prescription antihistamine eye drops.

Manatee Health Disclaimer

The information in this newsletter is not a substitute for medical advice. It is for reference only and should not be used to determine treatment for your specific medical conditions—only a health care provider can do this. You should seek prompt medical care for any specific health issues and consult your physician regarding the use of over-the-counter products to treat any medical condition or consult your physician regarding the use of prescription or over-the-counter products to treat any medical condition or before starting any new diet, fitness, or supplement regimen.

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