



AsthmaWA

Spring Triggers



For many people spring is their favourite time of year, with the sunshine and warmer weather enticing them to spend more time outdoors. Unfortunately, for many Australians this time of year can also bring unwanted changes to their asthma and allergies.

About

80%

of people with asthma
also have allergies



How to know if its allergies

It is important that, regardless of the time of year, you always take your medication as prescribed and follow your Asthma Action Plan to stay well and avoid flare-ups.

With allergies being so common among people with asthma, if you notice your asthma worsen in spring, it's time for you to discuss this with your doctor. They can then help you manage your symptoms better or refer you to a specialist if necessary. Some of the symptoms of allergies include:

- a runny, blocked or itchy nose
- sneezing more often than usual
- itchy, watery eyes

Common spring triggers

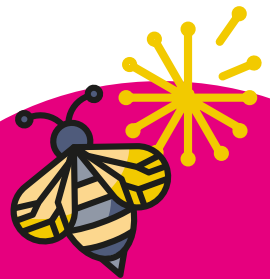
Being aware of and understanding your triggers will help you to manage and treat your asthma and allergies.

POLLEN

When people think of pollen, they often think of the flowers blooming during springtime, but the pollen that causes asthma and hay fever symptoms can also include trees, grasses and weeds that are pollinated by the wind.

If you enjoy getting outdoors in spring here are a few tips to help reduce your exposure:

- Consider the weather – on high pollen, windy days or after a spring thunderstorm, if possible, stay indoors
- Keep the pollen outside – close windows and doors on windy days or when mowing the grass. Shower or change clothes after being outside, and if you use an air conditioner, make sure it is turned to recirculate, so it doesn't bring the pollen inside
- Choose suitable plants – such as a low maintenance ground covering that does not require a lot of mowing and plants that are not wind-pollinated. Your local nursery can help you choose something suitable
- Keep on top of weeds – get onto them quickly so you can avoid them going to seed or flower
- Wash and dry clothing inside – this will help prevent pollen landing on clean clothes



Plants with big spring blooms are mainly pollinated by birds and bees so the risk of breathing these in are generally very low.



Visit our online store for a range of useful products:
asthmawa.org.au/shop

DUST MITES

House dust mites are a common allergen trigger all year round and can be worse in temperate and humid climates such as coastal Australia. Unfortunately, even with the best cleaning regime there is no way to completely eliminate dust mites, but there are a number of reduction strategies that may improve asthma and allergy symptoms.

Some of these strategies include:

- Washing bed linen weekly in hot water, above 55°C
- Removing soft toys from bedrooms or wash weekly, the same as bed linen
- Using dust mite resistant covers on mattresses, pillows and doonas. Visit our online shop to view a range of products available
- Removing sheepskins and woollen underlays
- Vacuuming rugs and carpets weekly – ideally using a vacuum with a HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filter, while the allergic person is absent
- Dusting surfaces with a damp or electrostatic cloth regularly (including hard floors)

MOULD

During winter your house may develop more mould than usual because of increased dampness and lack of ventilation. As such, spring may be the first chance you get to properly deal with the cause of the mould in your home. Here are some tips for reducing the risk of mould:

- Maintain good ventilation where possible
- Control moisture by:
 - Fixing water leaks and plumbing problems
 - Clearing and cleaning overflowing gutters and under-floor vents
 - Drying wet areas as soon as possible
- Be aware of and monitor other potential sources such as indoor plants, fish tanks, garden mulches and compost heaps
- Find out more about mould and how to remove it on our website

ANIMAL DANDER

In winter, many animals grow thicker coats that they then shed as the weather warms up. It's quite common for people think it is the fur of their pets that they are allergic to, but it is often their dry skin flakes (dander), saliva, urine or faeces. Cats, dogs, horses and even birds can be common triggers for allergies and asthma and avoidance may be the best measure. However, it's not always that easy, so if you already have a pet here are some tips to help reduce exposure:

- Keep the pet outside as much as possible
- Avoid having pets in the main living areas and bedrooms, particularly in rooms with carpets and soft furnishings
- Wash the pet and its bedding and toys regularly
- Wash your hands and face after touching the pet
- Vacuum regularly and consider a HEPA filter



If your allergies are making it harder to control your asthma, speak to your doctor or pharmacist on how to manage your asthma and hay fever better, or call Asthma WA on (08) 9289 3600 to book your free consultation.