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How to Manage Your Allergies Better

By **Susan Dunn**

How to Manage Your Allergies Better by Susan Dunn, MA, Emotional Intelligence Coach

It's not those beautiful roses that make us scratch, sniff and wheeze. It's the pollen from trees, grasses and low-growing things like ragweed (ah choo!).

Here are some of the things you can do to ease your allergies:

1. Keep windows and doors closed.
2. When you come in from outside, if you've been exposed to allergens, take a shower and shampoo your hair. Same for the kids.
3. When allergens are at their peak, stay inside. This site (<http://www.pollen.com>) will tell you how your city is doing, and generally speaking allergens are worse in the mornings.
4. Avoid fans because they circulate the air, especially that ceiling fan over your bed.
5. Get your bedrooms more friendly. Remove anything that collects dust - curtains, drapes, stuffed toys, rugs, books, and, alas, Fido needs to sleep elsewhere. Use blinds and linoleum or tile for flooring.

And speaking of Fido, best allergy-friendly choices for a dog are Maltese, bichon frise and poodle. For a cat, the sphinx or the rex. (Source: Dr. Kross, DVM, <http://familyfun.go.com/raisingkids/learn/activities/expert/petvetbestbreeds/petvetbestbreeds.html>)

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6. Avoid places where molds are - basement, lawn mowing and raking leaves, humidifiers, and leaving clothes in the washing machine. Don't let wet towels lie or hang around. Take care of plumbing and roof leaks immediately.

Also beware of mold in refrigerated jams and jelly, and on cured, salty meats like ham, bacon and salami, certain cheeses. Don't sniff it, just throw it out. For more on mold and food, go here: <http://food.oregonstate.edu/misc/mold.html> .

7. Wash bedding frequently at a temperature of at least 130 degrees F.

Use hypoallergenic covers for mattress, pillows and box springs. (Your bed is full of dust mites).

8. Keep your house and lawn as uninviting to cockroaches and bug as possible. Keep food sanitary and in the garbage, not lying around. Avoid lots of ground cover near the swimming pool. Get rid of paper grocery bags. They can harbor cockroach eggs.

9. Avoid irritants such as scented candles, eucalyptus, perfume, potpourri, chalk dust, newspaper print, tobacco smoke, and markers. Use hypoallergenic makeup and cleaning products.

10. If you're allergic to a food, avoid it. Also certain foods cross-react with certain pollens to give a double whammy. For example, elm is pollinating in January and February, and milk products should be reduced or eliminated. Check out the list here: <http://www.wfaa.com/weather/allergy/allergy7.html> .

For more resources, go here: <http://www.aaaai.org/patientsopicofthemonth/0201/default.stm> .

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Food Allergies

By Steve Wilcott

An allergy can be described as a malfunction of the immune system, an exaggerated response to certain substances. Your body mistakenly believes that something it has touched, smelled or eaten is harmful to it and your body releases massive amounts of chemicals, such as histamine to protect itself.

It is believed that 11 million Americans suffer from food allergies. These allergies are as varied as food itself is. Some people suffer from an allergy to one food, some to many. The most common food allergies are generally eggs, milk, peanuts, tree nuts (such as walnuts), fish, shellfish, soy and wheat.

Symptoms of food allergies are varied and range from a tingling of the mouth to swelling of the tongue and throat to difficulty breathing to hives, cramps, diarrhea, vomiting and in some instances death.

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There are ways to help you or your loved one manage your food allergies. First seek the help of an allergist. Your allergist will perform a patch test to determine the exact cause of allergic reactions. This will be the guideline you use as you develop a diet based around your food allergies.

As with other types of allergies there is no cure for a food allergy. Some children do grow out of some food allergies as they age although allergies to peanuts, fish, shellfish and nuts are often considered lifetime allergies. You or your loved one must simply avoid the food that causes the allergy. This can be difficult, especially when eating out in a restaurant. Depending on the severity of allergy, even slight cross contamination of food products can cause reactions.

Food labeling is a very important component of avoiding foods that trigger allergies. Since 2000 the FDA has been presenting information on allergy risks and labeling requirements to manufacturers. They seek to have manufacturers change some labels to be easier to read, using plain language like "milk" on a label instead of "caseinate".

In the case of a milk or egg allergy there are alternatives that can be used when cooking or baking. There are many online sites dedicated to supplying information, education and support to those with food allergies.

This article courtesy of

<http://www.allergies-questions.com>

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