



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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Over allergy season, consult your physician on side effects of medication

(HARRISBURG, PA.) With tree pollination emerging, and after a winter of above-average snowfall, pollen and mold spores will trigger more allergies in Pennsylvanian this spring.

The traditional symptoms of a runny nose and scratchy eyes often lead patients to over-the-counter (OTC) medications for relief. However, many of these products can cause side effects including excessive drowsiness and increased blood pressure, and it's good for patients to consult their family physician before use, especially if the side effects may exacerbate existing conditions.

"Some OTC medications work fine," said Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians President Douglas Spotts, MD. "However, for some patients, the side effects can be problematic. Many allergy sufferers develop repeated sinus infections, ear infections, and headaches. In these cases, it's best to see your doctor as soon as possible."

Further, some remedies such as intranasal corticosteroids and new histamine blockers require a prescription.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 10 million visits to physician offices are made in the United States every year where the primary diagnosis is allergic rhinitis (allergic inflammation).

The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians and its Foundation supports its members (including nearly 80 percent of Pennsylvania family physicians) through advocacy and education to ensure a patient-centered medical home for every Pennsylvanian. The Academy and its Foundation are the leading influential resource among family physicians and physicians in training in Pennsylvania; the primary voice on health care issues with state legislative and administrative branches of government, media and professional health organizations; and the leader on health care issues in the community.

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