



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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PAFP: Talk with your family physician about spring allergies and medications

(HARRISBURG, Pa. Apr. 8, 2021) As we welcome spring, we once again welcome seasonal allergies across Pennsylvania. Much of the state is already reporting moderate to high levels of tree pollens in the air.

Many people are familiar with the runny nose, scratchy throat and itchy, watery eyes of seasonal allergies, and often reach for over-the-counter (OTC) medications for relief. Unfortunately, many of those products can have side effects, including excessive drowsiness, dizziness, or even elevated blood pressure. It is always a good idea to consult with your primary care doctor if you are considering trying an OTC medication, as the side effects could worsen an underlying health condition.

“While over-the-counter allergy medications work well for many people, the side effects may be problematic for some,” Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians President Dr. Tiffany Leonard said. “Also, many allergy sufferers can develop repeat sinus infections, ear infections and headaches, so it is a good idea to schedule a visit with your family doctor if you feel like your medications are not working or the side effects are unbearable.”

Proper allergy testing should always be conducted by a trained medical provider, as many of the “at home” allergy tests are not validated and are inaccurate. Your primary care physician can help you decide if testing is needed and how to obtain proper testing.

According to the CDC, nearly 1 in 5 Americans are diagnosed with an environmental allergy and over half of those with allergies report they affect their daily life.

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The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians and its Foundation is a physician-led organization committed to advancing quality health care through advocacy, education, workforce development and commitment to the patients we serve. For over 70 years and with more than 5,500 physician, resident and student members, the Academy and its Foundation’s core values are visionary leadership, integrity and community.