

# 7 signs of spring allergies

Few things are more deflating than finally venturing outdoors after a long winter of cabin fever, only to find that blooming trees and flowers start wreaking havoc with your personal health.

Spring allergies, also known as allergic rhinitis, occur when the body's immune system overreacts to indoor or outdoor allergens, such as tree and grass pollen, mold and dust. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, approximately 25.7 percent of adults and 18.9 percent of children in the United States suffer from seasonal allergies. Allergic rhinitis accounts for an estimated \$16 billion in annual health care costs and is a leading cause of reduced productivity while at work.

Identifying the symptoms of allergies is key to distinguishing them from a cold or another infection and to ensuring fast relief. Spring allergies typically peak from March to May and may even continue into July. Physicians will look for specific physical markers to confirm allergies.

1. Sneezing: Sneezing can occur in rapid-fire patterns, known as paroxysmal sneezing, especially after spending time outdoors. These

intense episodes can be tied to allergies or be symptomatic of another condition, says the National Institutes of Health.

2. Itchy, watery eyes: Allergic conjunctivitis is the medical term for this condition, which is a hallmark of spring allergies. Eyes will appear red, feel gritty or drip clear fluid.

3. Nasal congestion/runny nose: A thin, clear discharge typically is a sign of allergies, whereas any mucus that is thick, yellow or green could indicate an infection. Constant upward rubbing of the nose from allergies (called the allergic salute) often causes a permanent transverse nasal crease at the junction of the nose tip and the bridge, says Healthline.

4. Itchy throat and ears: Pollen may cause a scratchy or tingling sensation in the throat and in the ear canals. Medical professionals warn that chronic inflammation from allergies is a primary risk factor for secondary bacterial infections that can occur in the sinuses and ears. Eustachian tube dysfunction occurs when fluid builds up behind the eardrum because the eustachian tubes become blocked or don't open properly to let fluid drain to the nose and throat, says the Cleveland Clinic.

Pressure imbalances, muffled hearing, popping sounds, and even pain can occur.

5. "Allergic shiners": Nasal congestion can cause swelling and increased blood vessels to the small veins in the infraorbital area, causing dark, bluish circles under the eyes called periorbital hyperpigmentation, says the Center for Orofacial Myology. This makes allergy sufferers appear as though they have two black eyes.

6. Cough: Post-nasal drip occurs when mucus drips down the back of the throat from the nose. This can cause a persistent, dry cough that's often worse at night. Post-nasal drip also may result in a sore throat and a "cobblestone" appearance in the back of the throat that's visible during a medical exam.

7. Fatigue: Insufficient rest due to allergy-related discomfort can cause those with spring allergies to feel fatigued. The constant immune system response to allergies also can lead to daytime tiredness and lack of focus.

Allergic rhinitis is a problem for millions of people each spring. A combination of avoiding triggers and using allergy medications can help calm any symptoms that crop up.

# Get Your Yard Ready With These 7 Spring Lawn Tips

Ready to get out the lawn mower, hedge or string trimmer or other outdoor power equipment to spruce up your backyard? The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) urges homeowners to keep safety in mind before starting up any equipment.

"We know you're eager but think safety first," says Kris Kiser, President and CEO of OPEI, an international trade association representing outdoor power equipment, small engine, utility vehicle, golf car and personal transport vehicle manufacturers and suppliers. "I can't stress enough to review manufacturer's safety guidance before starting up any equipment - and follow it."

OPEI offers these tips for readying and using your outdoor power equipment:

#1 - Read and follow your owner's manual. Technology is ever changing with evolving safety systems and other features. Your manufacturer-supplied manual will guide you in these differences.

#2 - Walk your yard before mowing, cutting, digging and more. Slopes, wet grass and weather may impact equipment performance, as well as safe handling procedures. Pick up fallen sticks and limbs and any loose objects that could be hit by a mower. Inspect trees for damaged limbs that may get in your way when mowing or may require pruning.

#3 - Know every lawn mower is different. Whether your mower is a garden tractor, zero turn mower or

other type, its unique design, power supply, performance, operating parameters, weight, and other differences impact how to use it - and how to use it safely.

#4 - Look over equipment before use. Check the air filter, oil level and gasoline tank. Watch for loose belts and missing or damaged parts. Replace any parts needed or take your equipment to a qualified service representative. Never disable or alter manufacturer-installed safety equipment.

#5 - Protect your power. Use only E10 or less fuel in gasoline-powered outdoor power equipment if it is not designed for higher ethanol blends. Add a fuel stabilizer if you don't use up all the fuel in the tank right away. Burn off any fuel before storing the mower more than 30 days.

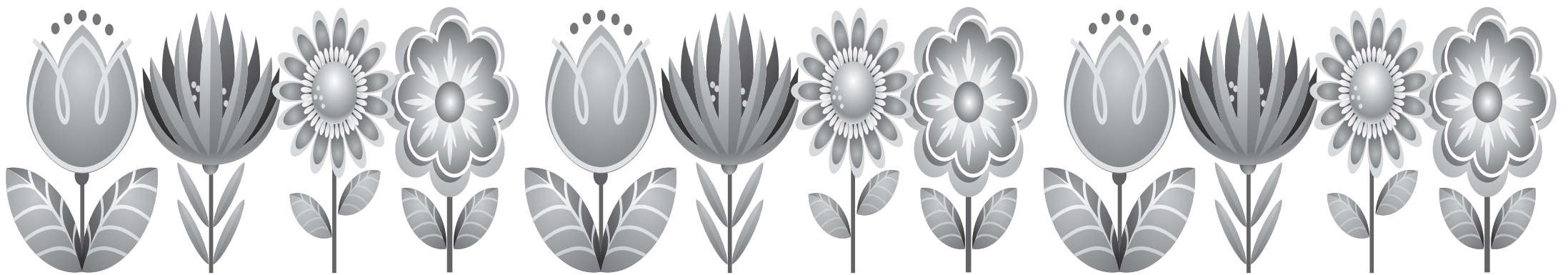
Only use battery packs specified by the manufacturer for battery/electric equipment. Follow all manufacturer's charging and storing instructions.

#6 - Keep children and pets away from operating outdoor power. Period.

#7 - Keep your equipment clean. Remove dirt, oil or grass before using and storing so it will run more efficiently and last longer. Store equipment in a dry place, avoiding damp or wet environments.

For information on safe fueling, go to <https://www.opei.org/programs/ethanolwarning/>

For more outdoor power equipment safety information visit [www.opei.org](http://www.opei.org)



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