

Spring cleaning often a sneezing nightmare for allergy sufferers

April 24 2014, by Evie Polsley

The warm weather brings with it the urge to open the windows and start cleaning out the closets, but for allergy sufferers the spring cleaning bug can be miserable.

"Although allergies are with us year-round, we think about them more during the springtime because that's when spring plants pollinate, causing a large number of allergens to be released into the air and [allergy](#) symptoms to flare," said Joyce Rabbat, MD, a pediatric allergist at Loyola University Medical Center and assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics and Division of Allergy, Immunology and Rheumatology.

Though it might be tempting to open windows and doors to air out the house on beautiful spring days, according to Rabbat, it's best to keep them closed and the air conditioner running if there is an allergy sufferer in the house. Pollens can enter the home through opened doors and windows, settling onto couches, carpets and bedding and filling the indoors with allergy triggers.

Another common culprit for bringing allergens into the house is the family pet. Dogs and cats that have been outside enjoying the weather can have pollen spores in their fur, which they bring into the house. To curb this, Rabbat suggested:

- Give your animals frequent baths
- Keep your pet's hair trimmed short

- Have pet-free areas in the house, such as bedrooms and other places

"If you do suffer from seasonal allergies, it's best to take medication before the season peaks. This can help ward off a bad flare-up. Talk to your allergist about when the [allergy season](#) is going to peak and when to start your allergy medication," Rabbat said.

If you are cleaning out the closets and have an allergy to mold or dust, Rabbat suggested wearing a mask and taking an antihistamine before cleaning begins. Also, run an air purifier during the cleaning and be sure to vacuum the carpet after the cleaning is done.

If heading outside for spring yard renewal, Rabbat said to try to avoid being outside during the peak hours for pollen - 5-10 a.m. To limit tracking pollen into the house, she suggested:

- Shower or take a bath as soon as you enter the [house](#)
- Put on a fresh pair of clothes

"A common pollen reservoir is bedding. It's best to take a shower each night before heading to bed and wash and change bedding frequently during your allergy season," Rabbat said.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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