

Now's the time to tackle springtime allergies

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(HealthDay)—With spring allergy season just around the corner, it's time to start thinking about how to deal with your symptoms, experts say.

"Bottom line, very few people suffer from the same allergies or symptoms," Dr. Bradley Chipps, president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), said in a news release from the organization.

"You have to create a personal treatment plan by first avoiding the things you're allergic to, and then treating your specific symptoms," he said.

"The question for many people is whether over-the-counter remedies are enough, or if prescription medications are needed," Chipps said.

New guidelines from ACAAI recommend "nasal steroid sprays as the first line of defense, instead of an oral antihistamine," said Dr. Dana Wallace, the organization's past president and a co-author of the guidelines.

"The task force didn't find evidence of better results if oral antihistamines were added to treatment along with the nasal steroid sprays," she said. "And oral antihistamines can cause sleepiness."

For people older than 12 who have moderate to severe seasonal allergies, the guidelines suggest adding an intranasal antihistamine spray to treatment along with a nasal steroid inhaler.

The [allergy](#) experts also touted the benefits of [allergy shots](#) and tablets, known as immunotherapy.

Allergy shots involve getting gradually larger doses of your exact allergens, the experts said. This causes your immune system to become less sensitive, reducing your [allergy symptoms](#), they explained.

Allergy tablets, which you put under your tongue, can ease symptoms brought on by certain grasses and dust, the experts said.

People with [seasonal allergies](#) should start taking medication two to three weeks before symptoms typically start, the experts said.

More information: The U.S. National Institutes of Health has more on [managing seasonal allergies](#).

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