

**Asthma is a disease affecting 1 in 12 Americans. Symptoms of this disease can be made worse by the presence of common spring time allergens in the air.**



As the sun comes out, the snow starts to melt, the trees start to bloom and we can finally escape from our winter burrows; allergy season is in full bloom. For those suffering from asthma, this can be particularly difficult with the triggering of symptoms, making it even more difficult for them to breathe.

### **Disease Background and Symptoms:**

Asthma is a disease marked by spasms and narrowing (inflammation) of the airways. This causes difficulty in breathing which results in symptoms that include: coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and/or chest tightness. The onsets of asthma attacks are sudden and are due to triggers specific to each individual. Often, seasonal allergies, pet allergies, and plant allergies can play a role in triggering an asthma attack as

well. According to the Center for Disease Control, 1 in 12 people have asthma and the numbers are on the rise. Many of the 25 million Americans that suffer from asthma also have allergies or allergic asthma. While the reason for the increase in asthma and allergy rates is unknown, most people can control their symptoms and prevent attacks. This disease results in nearly 2 million emergency room visits per year. Keeping asthma and allergies under control is vital to living a healthy and productive lifestyle. The major components of asthma are airway obstruction, inflammation and airway irritability, frequent coughing, shortness of breath, wheezing, and chest tightness. Airway obstruction occurs when the muscles in the airways constrict, making it difficult for air to move. When the airways “overreact” to a trigger, such as pollen, dust or other allergen, the airway then narrows leading to airway irritability and inflammation. Those who have a family history of asthma and allergies have an increased risk of developing symptoms.

Asthma attacks often coincide with an allergy trigger. An allergy is an abnormal response of the immune system to non-harmful substances called allergens. This response, known as an allergic reaction, can result in symptoms, such as: itchy eyes and skin, sneezing, nasal congestion, wheezing and/or rash. Allergy symptoms range from mild to severe and affect 1 out of every 5 Americans.

### **Treatment:**

Treatment of asthma and allergies can differ between individuals, as there are many medications that are available that target different pathways. The severity of your symptoms, as well as the triggers, will determine which types of treatments your physician will prescribe. Asthma is a complex disease with many treatment options ranging from short acting rescue inhalers to long acting combination therapies.

#### **Short Acting Rescue Inhalers:**

- ProAir
- Proventil
- Ventolin

#### **Long Acting Combination Therapies:**

- Advair
- Breo Ellipta
- Dulera
- Symbicort

Prescription treatment options are custom tailored to the individuals' disease prevalence and severity, it is crucial to have routine monitoring and check-ups with your doctors.

There are also a variety of medications,

over-the-counter and prescription, that can help keep allergy symptoms under control in order to avoid any unnecessary asthma triggers.

#### **Over the Counter**

##### **Oral Antihistamines:**

- Allegra
- Benadryl
- Claritin
- Zyrtec

#### **Over the Counter**

##### **Nasal and Eye Relief:**

- Flonase
- Nasacort
- Rhinocortand
- Zaditor and Visine (eye drops)

#### **Prescription**

##### **Antihistamine Nasal Sprays:**

- Dymista
- Qnasl
- Omnaris

#### **Prescription**

##### **Ophthalmic Antihistamines:**

- Patanol
- Pataday
- Azelastine
- Naphazoline

As with any medication, please work with your doctor or pharmacist to find the best fit for your symptoms. Here at ProAct, we encourage you to be *ProActive* about your asthma and allergy symptoms so you can get outside and live active lifestyles. Happy Spring (hopefully with less sniffles and sneezes this year.)

Sincerely,  
Your ProAct Team

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For questions or comments please call : 1.877.635.9545

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