Spring Into Action Against Allergies

Millions of people sneeze, sniffle and cough their way through spring. But suffering with hay fever symptoms isn’t your only option— you can take action to feel better right away.

Know your triggers.
Your symptoms are a sign that your body’s immune system is overreacting to a specific allergen, or irritant, such as grass, tree or weed pollen. These particles are so small that they travel well in the wind and are easy to inhale. When you breathe in the substance you’re allergic to your symptoms start. To avoid pollen, try these tips:

- Keep windows and doors closed when your allergies tend to act up.
- Use air-conditioning, if possible, to filter air. Other filtration devices made of fiberglass or electrically charge plates may help clean the air too. However, be wary of claims that a filter can clean all allergens from the air, prevent colds or the flu.
- Plan outdoor activities for the afternoon or evening. Pollen levels are usually highest be 5 a.m. and 10 a.m.
- Change your clothes after being outside.
- Wash your hands after touching a pet that has been outside.
- If possible, have someone else mow your lawn or do other outdoor chores. If you’re going to do them, wear a filtering face mask.
- Wash your hair before you go to bed to keep pollen from getting on pillows and sheets.

Consider Medication.
If your symptoms don’t subside, it may be time to turn to medication. Talk with your doctor first, especially if you have an underlying medical problem or take other medications. He or she can prescribe medication if over-the-counter remedies aren’t enough.
What is Your Diabetes Risk?

Even if you feel healthy, you should watch out for diabetes.

You have an increased risk if you:
• Have a family history of the disease.
• Weigh more than 20 percent over a healthy weight.
• Are in a high-risk ethnic group, such as African-Americans, Latinos, American Indians, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders.
• Have a history of diabetes during pregnancy.
• Have delivered a baby weighing more than 9 pounds.
• Have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, high cholesterol or pre-diabetes. (When your blood glucose level is above normal but not yet in the diabetes range.)

The more risk factors you have the higher your chance of getting diabetes. Talk with your doctor about any risk factors you have. Together you can come up with a plan to take steps toward a healthier lifestyle.

Make Exercise a Family Affair

Does setting aside time for exercise seem impossible? Is it hard to make time for family and friends? Why not try to do both at once?

Start doing something active together 1 or 2 days a week. Here are some ideas:
• Go to the park or community center. Shoot hoops or kick around a soccer ball.
• Train for a road race. Pick a charity to run or walk for.
• Jump rope, play hopscotch or dance.
• Have an exercise class at home. Try jumping jacks, stretching or jogging in place.

Always check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Talk with your kids about the health benefits of exercise. Explain how helping each other stay active shows how you care about one another. Your children learn from your attitude. Let’s make exercise fun!

The Good Fat

The good fat. Monounsaturated fats are heart-healthy fats found in canola, olive and peanut oils. Polyunsaturated fats are also found in vegetable oils, as well as seafood. Eating omega-3 polyunsaturated fats, found in flaxseed and salmon, tuna and mackerel may help prevent heart disease. Most of the fat in your diet should come from these two types of fat. When used in place of saturated fat, they can help lower blood cholesterol and triglycerides.

The Bad Fat

Saturated fat is found mainly in animal foods, such as meat, butter, cheese, whole and low-fat milk and other dairy products. Coconut and palm oils also contain saturated fat. Saturated fat raises blood cholesterol and increases the risk for heart disease.

The Ugly Fat

When vegetable oils are hydrogenated, trans fat is created. This type of fat raises blood cholesterol perhaps more so than saturated fat. Check labels and avoid food containing vegetable shortening or hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils.

Prenatal Care is Not “One Size Fits All”

The U Baby Care Program offers services for all of our pregnant mothers whether you are high or low risk.

Please let us know if any of the following apply to you:
• If you delivered a premature baby born before 37 weeks.
• If you are pregnant within a year of giving birth to your last child.
• If you are having twins or triplets.
• If you received any infertility treatment with this pregnancy.
• If you have diabetes or high blood pressure.

You are considered low risk if the following is true:
• You previously delivered a full term baby.
• You have had vaginal deliveries.
• No known medical problems.
• No previous c-sections.
• Between the ages of 20 to 39.

We have OB providers specialized in working with low risk and high risk moms to make sure you get the customized service you need.

To learn more about how we can help you with your pregnancy please call us at (801)587-6480, option 2.
CHANGING YOUR PLAN

Did you just have a baby? Maybe you just got married, or one of your children has left home. If so, you may have had a Qualifying Event.

A Qualifying Event is a life changing circumstance that affects your health insurance coverage. This qualifies you to enroll, cancel enrollment, or add/drop dependents to your health coverage at a time other than open enrollment.

The following are examples of Qualifying Events:

- Your work hours are reduced.
- You become entitled to benefits under Medicare.
- You get married or divorced.
- Employee death. (Qualifying Event for dependents.)
- You have a baby or adopt a child.
- You become legally separated from your spouse.
- You lose coverage under your spouse’s plan.
- You child stops qualifying as an eligible dependent.
- Your employment ends for a reason other than gross misconduct.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please note that you must submit a request (change form) to Human Resources (HR) within three months of the Qualifying Event. If you do not notify HR within three months, the requested change will not be made and you will have to wait until the next open enrollment.

KNOW YOUR BENEFITS

To learn more about your benefits with University Health Care Plus (UHCP), read your UHCP Summary Plan Document. The most current version is on our website at http://uhealthplan.utah.edu. The most recent provider directory is also available on the website. If you want a UHCP Summary Plan Document sent to you, call Member Services at (801)587-6480 or 1-888-271-5870.

FIND A PROVIDER

UHCP has more than 2800 University of Utah and community providers (non-University) and we are adding new providers all the time. Visit http://uhealthplan.utah.edu to see our latest provider directory.