Don’t Suffer from Spring Allergies—**Take Action!**

The welcoming warmth of spring is easily blunted by rampant pollination, triggering the explosive sneezing, sniffles, stuffy sinuses, foggy brain, and general wretchedness of springtime allergies. And if you’re into spring cleaning—and kicking up dust, pet dander, mold and other allergens—your misery can be multiplied! **Try these tips to limit your allergen exposure this season:**

- **Check the pollen count in your area.** Visit [http://www.pollen.com/allergy-weather-forecast.asp](http://www.pollen.com/allergy-weather-forecast.asp) to see the allergy forecast; stay inside when the pollen count is high (usually on windy days); and keep the windows closed.

- **Change your clothes or take a shower to remove pollen when you come inside**—especially if you’ve spent extended time gardening, hiking, etc.

- **Replace your car’s cabin air filters to reduce incoming dust.** Close the vents and turn the air knob to “re-circulating air.”

- **Clear out dust mites.** Dust often, using a damp cloth and while wearing a dust mask. Vacuum using a cleaner with a HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter to trap dust mite particles, pet dander, and more.

- **Wash bedding weekly in hot water and dry it in a hot dryer.** This will kill the dust mites. Consider encasing your mattress, pillows and box spring in mite-proof covers.

- **Keep your furry friend out of your bedroom**—especially if you’re allergic to pet dander. Shut the door. Vacuum often and wash your pet regularly to reduce dander around the house.

- **Rinse your sinuses.** Using a saline nasal spray, for example, can help improve allergy symptoms.

- **Still sniffing? Talk to your healthcare practitioner, who may suggest antihistamines, immunotherapy (allergy shots) and other ways to address your triggers.**

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**Manage stress through resilience**

How do you respond to stress, change or obstacles in your life? Do you rise to challenges or give in to them? Resilient people see life’s stressors and challenges as opportunities to grow rather than threats to their well-being. Resilience is a personal strength that allows you to handle setbacks, manage stress, overcome adversity, adapt to change and maintain a “never give up” attitude. It’s an inner strength that helps you deal with life while staying centered and balanced. Some people are lucky to be resilient by nature, but most people have to work at it! **Try some or all of these tips to help you improve your resilience:**

- **Be proactive.** Recognize when trouble is ahead and address it before it becomes an overwhelming problem.

- **Prioritize self-care.** Make yourself your number one priority! Participate in activities that benefit your well-being such as staying on top of your healthcare, exercising and eating right.

- **Accept change.** Recognize that the only part of change you can control is your response to it!

- **Learn from failure.** Think about mistakes, slip-ups and failures as learning experiences to help you do better the next time. Try to focus on actions that move you forward, even in some small way.

- **Know when to seek additional help.** Accept circumstances when you’re unable to deal with something on your own and get others involved to help.
Reduce Your **Emotional Clutter**

Much like having a house cluttered with items you don’t really need, it’s easy for your emotions to get fouled up from random worries, mounds of irrelevant information, and unrealistic expectations placed on yourself. The following tips can help tame your emotional clutter, clearing a path to feeling more clear-headed, productive and in control of your life.

**Stash intrusive worries in a worry journal.** Set aside time daily to jot down any distracting concerns in a journal. Later, review your journal and write out “solutions” to help resolve each worry.

**Streamline information overload.** For example, to stem the flood of emails or phone messages, tell your friends what information you do and don’t want to receive, such as jokes, political news, etc. And resist the temptation to search the internet for endless snippets of information—limit your searches to finding information to answer top priority concerns.

**Consider limiting overly distressing news!** Try removing some of the news apps and constant feeds from your phone or computer. Switch to listening to uplifting podcasts or music on your commute. At first, you may feel more nervous that you’re missing something, but by being selective, you may feel less reactive. Or, consider offsetting the stress by getting involved in your community—you may feel empowered that you are making a difference.

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**Stress Awareness Month**

**Read:** Learn how everyday stress and stress from traumatic events can affect you, and get ways to reduce symptoms from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**Find out more:**


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**Let go of perfectionism.** Instead of spending your energy on getting things “just right,” strive to achieve your personal best. Remind yourself that not everyone or every situation is truly “perfect.” Everyone has their own issues and insecurities, but not everyone reveals them.

**If you’re feeling bogged down with worries, your health practitioner may suggest further forms of support to help you feel more calm and clear-headed.**

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