

# Allergy season has arrived at AHS

With spring right around the corner, students have much to look forward to. Seniors are wrapping up their final year at AHS and underclassmen are anticipating an eventful summer.

Despite the good times that lie ahead, many students are faced with a looming threat: seasonal allergies.

Like other types of allergies, seasonal allergies develop when the body's immune system overreacts to something in the environment, usually during spring, summer or fall when certain plants pollinate.

Almost everyone agrees that allergies really bring you down. No one wants to be sneezing all throughout your springtime endeavors.

"My seasonal allergies impair my ability to breathe during sports events," junior Annika Yugner said.

However, students shouldn't surrender to their allergies. Luckily enough, there are many methods to cope with seasonal allergies.

The first step should be consulting an allergist. It is critical to ensure your symptoms are purely seasonal and not year round.

More than two-thirds of spring allergy sufferers actually have year-round symptoms. Your best resource for finding what's causing your suffering and stopping it, not just treating the symptoms, is an allergist.

Working with your allergist, it is important that you monitor pollen and mold counts.

Luckily, weather reports in newspapers and on radio and television often include this information during allergy seasons.

Although it may deprive you of all that healthy Vitamin D, keeping windows and doors shut at home and in your car will help reduce your exposure to pollen.

To further avoid pollen, know which pollens you are sensitive to and then check pollen counts.

In spring and summer, during tree and grass pollen season, levels are highest in the evening.

The easiest of precautions is to take a shower, wash your hair and change your clothes after you've been working or playing outdoors.

Depending on the severity of your allergies, your allergist may also recommend one or more medications to control symptoms. Some of the most widely recommended drugs are available without a prescription.

One of the most effective ways to treat seasonal allergies linked to pollen is immunotherapy (allergy shots).

These injections expose you over time to gradual increments of your allergen, so you learn to tolerate it rather than reacting with sneezing, a stuffy nose or itchy, watery eyes.

"Allergy shots are effective because they allows parents to be aware of basic daily items that could give their children allergic reactions," junior Alex Yi said.

If you suffer from seasonal allergies, it is also crucial to understand the triggers related to your symptoms.

While the term "seasonal allergies" generally refers to grass, pollen and mold, there is a different group of triggers that are closely tied to particular seasons.

In regards to the upcoming seasons of spring and summer, insect bites and stings and chlorine in indoor and outdoor swimming pools are triggers tied to those two seasons.

All of this information is lengthy for allergies that only affect you during a certain season.

Seasonal allergies are extremely difficult to handle. However, many people are effected by allergies year round.

Allergies affect an estimated 40 million to 50 million people in the United States. Some allergies may interfere with day-to-day activities or lessen the quality of life.

Year-round allergies are just as severe if not more than seasonal allergies. Some examples of year round allergies include food, pet and drug allergies.

Food allergies are estimated to affect 4% – 6% of children and 4% of adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Additionally, while any food can cause an adverse reaction, eight types of food account for about 90 percent of all reactions: eggs, milk, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, wheat or soy.

In regards to a pet allergy, the two most common types are allergies related to dogs and cats.

Unlike food and pet allergies, there is no common drug that a wide population of people are allergic to.

The best method for preventing allergic reactions to these examples is simply avoiding them. As a matter of fact, avoiding anything that makes allergic will logically reduce your chances of a reaction or the development of symptoms.

Whether you suffer from seasonal allergies or year round allergies, it is important to take the necessary steps to ensure your own well being.

Taking precautionary steps such as allergy shots keeps you healthy and provides valuable information about your own health.

Simple steps such as avoiding your allergens will keep you healthy and active during the time of beautiful weather and freedom from obligations.