

What is seasonal allergic rhinitis?

Is your nose running or clogged? You sneeze regularly? A sense of itching in your nose and in your eyes? And this during spring and summer or the whole year through? These are symptoms of allergic rhinitis, a condition where 20% of the Belgians suffer from.

It is your own body that causes these symptoms. It is an exaggerated response of your immune system that identifies these substances as being dangerous. These substances are called "allergens". With most people these substances do not create any reaction. However, with sensitive people, the contact creates an allergic inflammatory response.

The allergic rhinitis can be caused by pollen of certain trees, grasses or plants. Then we talk about "hay fever". The presence of pollen in the air, for which you can be allergic, depends on the flowering period of the plant and that is why we talk about "seasonal" allergic rhinitis. You can only suffer from this allergy during this period. If you want to get a flowering calendar with the most important plants with allergenic pollen, please ask your pharmacy.

The weather conditions can also play a great part in the pollen concentrations in the air. Dry and warm weather facilitate the production of pollen, while the wind facilitate its spread. So the warmth, the drought, the wind make the hayfever worse.

For more information about the pollen concentration in the air :

www.airallergy.be

How do you recognize an allergic rhinitis ?

You may recognize an allergic rhinitis by repeatedly sneezing, a runny nose, itching in your palate, nose and/or eyes. Often your eyes tear, are red or your nose is clogged. The symptoms will stay as long as you are exposed to the allergens (pollen).

What to do ?

Of course it is unfeasible to avoid all contact with pollen. However it is possible to limit the frequency or the intensity of the symptoms by following these tips, which should be applied during the pollination period only (spring, summer) :

- Avoid mowing the grass or being present when the grass is mowed. Grass that is often mowed, produces less pollen.
- Avoid as much as possible all open air activities during these periods. Consult the pollen calendar.
- Wear sunglasses, especially when there is a lot of wind.
- Change your clothes after a walk and wash your hair.
- Do not let your clothes hang out to dry outside.
- Keep your windows closed, even at night. Ventilate regularly the rooms, preferably in the morning or during/after a rain shower. At that moment, there are less pollen in the air.
- Keep the windows of your car closed.
- Pets can also bring in pollen with their coat.
- Avoid flowers and bouquets at home.

The basic principle is to avoid allergens !

If you know for which substances you are allergic, try to avoid them.

These substances can be determined with an allergy test

**If it is not possible to avoid these allergens or it is not sufficient,
then there is medication that can help you**