

YOUR CARE POLMED

September 2020



Allergy season: 3 things to help make the transition easier



ASTHMA IN SA:

- 25th globally for asthma prevalence
- 5th highest death rate from asthma
- Most common chronic illness among children

Asthmatics should take precautions in managing their condition to protect their health.

DANGERS OF UNCONTROLLED ASTHMA

Uncontrolled asthma can increase the risk of:



Severe asthma attacks



Pneumonia



Anxiety



Depression



Coronavirus-related complications



Hospitalisation

ASTHMA TRIGGERS

Common asthma triggers include:



Changing seasons



Tobacco smoke



Air pollution



Dust mites



Pets



Pollen

ASTHMA AND CHANGING SEASONS

The change of seasons from winter to spring can increase the risk of asthma triggers:

- During winter, cold air (wet or dry) can worsen your asthma
- During spring, there's a lot of pollen in the air and this can cause health complications for asthmatics

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SEASONAL ASTHMA TRIGGERS



Keep your asthma pump on hand

- An asthma pump can help to reduce the risk of an asthma attack
- You should **know where your inhaler is** at all times
- Always be **aware of how much medicine** your pump contains
- Make sure your prescription is up to date
- Make sure you know **how to use your asthma pump properly**. Ask your treating doctor to check your technique



Spring clean

Spring cleaning can help remove any lingering dust or allergy triggers in your home. It can be hard for asthmatics to spring clean without triggering an attack, but there are ways to do it:

- Avoid harsh cleaners containing chemicals. **Use natural cleaners** or a home-made one made with vinegar, baking soda, and lemon
- **Wear a mask** to prevent inhaling dust and mould
- Try to **reduce clutter** in the home as this collects dust and mould
- Don't **use a feather duster** to dust. Rather use a damp cloth and then rinse it out
- **Remove all signs of mould** in the house (check under your kitchen sink and around your bathroom)
- **Wash your pet's bed** with hot water
- **Swap out any carpets** with washable rugs
- **Regularly mop** your home
- If you have air conditioners, **replace the filters** in your unit (every 2 – 3 months)



Take the right precautions before, during, and after being outdoors

Before you go outdoors:

- **Pollen is usually higher in the morning**, particularly between 4 a.m. – 10 a.m. It's better to stay indoors during this time
- Make sure to keep all **windows closed** when the pollen count is high
- Avoid hanging up your laundry on the washing line outside as clothes can attract pollen
- If you have to do your own gardening or laundry work, go outside when the pollen count is low and wear a mask

When outdoors:

- Wear sunglasses to stop pollen from blowing into your eyes
- Avoid places with lots of **grass**
- Keep away from car **exhaust fumes**

After being outdoors:

- **Change your clothes** and take a shower
- Make sure to **wash your hair**

References

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If you have any questions or need more information, please call POLMED on 0860 765 633 (select the option for the Disease Management Programme), or send an email to polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za with your membership number and contact details.