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Seasonal Allergy Season is in Full Bloom!

Pollen counts have been very high over the past few weeks and many of our patients have been suffering with allergy symptoms. Pollen season generally starts around mid-March and lasts through the end of June. During periods of high pollen counts, seasonal allergy sufferers often have the following symptoms without fever or other signs of illness: runny nose, sneezing, sore throat in the morning, mild cough, and itchy or watery eyes. You should also suspect seasonal allergies if your child has prolonged cold symptoms lasting more than 2 weeks in the spring season and/or a strong family history of allergies.

We recommend an **oral antihistamine treatment** (non-prescription) if your child's symptoms are that of cough, sore throat, itchy/runny nose, and sneezing.

You can try one of the following:

Zyrtec (cetirizine), Claritin (loratadine), or Allegra (fexofenadine): These are non-sedating antihistamines that are given once daily for allergy symptoms. They are available as pills, chewable tabs, dissolvable tabs, or liquid form.

If your child's symptoms are that of itchy, watery, or puffy eyes, you can try **non-prescription eye drops. Zatidor (ketotifen)** is very effective for the treatment of itchy eyes in children over 3 years. Place 1-2 drops into the inner corner of each eye twice a day. It is easiest to instill the drops when the child is lying down on his or her back.

It is important to take any of the medications above **daily** through the pollen season to get the most relief. Additionally, you can take measures to decrease the pollen coming into your home. Have your child wear a hat outside. Encourage children to change their clothes when coming inside, and take a shower or bath as soon as possible. Keep windows closed, and consider an indoor air filter if symptoms persist.

If you have tried these medications and are still experiencing significant symptoms, please call the office to make an appointment for evaluation of your child's allergy symptoms.