

Live Well,  
Work Well



April 2023

## Managing Seasonal Allergies



According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), allergies are the nation's sixth-leading cause of chronic illness. Seasonal allergies are an annual nuisance for many people and typically ramp up this time of year. It's no surprise that as plants bloom and neighbors cut their grass more frequently, people living with allergies across the nation start sniffing and sneezing. Further, as mold growth occurs both indoors and outdoors, it's almost impossible to escape these seasonal allergy triggers.

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**The AAFA reports that more than 50 million Americans experience allergies every year.**

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Some allergy symptoms may consist of sneezing a couple of times a year. Alternatively, seasonal allergies can cause congestion, a runny or itchy nose, watery eyes and headaches—among other symptoms—for weeks or months.

### Nip Your Allergies in the Bud

Similar to other types of allergies, seasonal allergies develop when your body's immune system detects and then overreacts to a foreign substance it deems harmful. Spring, summer and fall are the most common times for seasonal allergy symptoms to arise. What may trigger your seasonal allergies depends on what you're allergic to and where you live.

To reduce your seasonal allergy symptoms, consider the following tips:

- Keep track of local allergen (e.g., pollen and mold) counts to help you know when to avoid spending excessive time outside.
- Wash your bedding in hot water to help keep the spread of pollen under control in your home.
- Utilize washable indoor rugs to easily remove allergens.
- Take a shower after spending time outdoors, as pollen can stick to your hair, skin and clothing.
- Clean your floors often with a vacuum that has a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter.
- Change your air conditioning and heating HEPA filters often.

Treatment for most seasonal allergies is available both over the counter and by prescription. You may need a series of allergy shots if your symptoms are severe or chronic. Contact your doctor or allergist to determine which seasonal allergy treatment option is best for you.

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## The Mediterranean Diet Is 2023's Best Diet

U.S. News & World Report released its annual diet ranking, and the Mediterranean diet topped the list for the sixth consecutive year. This meal plan was named best overall for 2023 as the publication's health experts also voted it the best diet for healthy eating, the best plant-based diet, the best family-friendly diet and the best diet for bone and joint health.

The Mediterranean diet is a meal plan that emulates how people in the Mediterranean region have traditionally eaten, focusing on consuming whole grains and heart-healthy fats. This diet may help support brain function, promote heart health and regulate blood sugar levels. Research further suggests that this well-balanced eating pattern can help prevent some chronic diseases and increase longevity.

A nonrestrictive, healthy meal plan such as the Mediterranean diet may be easier to follow and stay committed to. If you have any questions about your diet, talk to your doctor.

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## Foods of the Mediterranean Diet

- Whole grains
- Healthy fats
- Legumes
- Fruits
- Vegetables

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## Reduce Your Risk of Hospitalization With 20 Minutes of Daily Exercise

A new study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open found that physical activity not only decreases people's risk of developing health problems, but may also help prevent them from being hospitalized. Researchers found that the magic number was just 20 minutes of daily exercise.

It's well known that exercise is linked to a lower risk of cancer, diabetes and heart disease. Still, the JAMA study explored the association for conditions not typically linked with exercise. The conditions significantly impacted by exercise were urinary tract infections, gallbladder disease and pneumonia.

Talk to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about incorporating exercise into your daily routine.

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## Brown Rice Tabbouleh

Makes: 6 servings

### Ingredients

- 3 cups brown rice (cooked)
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cucumber (chopped)
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup tomato (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fresh parsley (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fresh mint leaves (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup green onions (sliced)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. black pepper

### Preparations

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Toss the mixture well and chill until ready to serve.

## Nutritional Information (per serving)

- Total calories: 200
- Total fat: 10 g
- Protein: 3 g
- Sodium: 200 mg
- Carbohydrate: 26 g
- Dietary fiber: 2 g
- Saturated fat: 2 g
- Total sugars: 1 g

*Source: MyPlate*

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