

Live Well

National Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. This national campaign aims to raise awareness of the importance of mental health, reduce stigma and promote safe and healthy living practices. Read on to learn what you can do to improve your mental health.

Tips for Improving Mental Health

Your mental health affects the way you think, act and feel. It can also change with your environment, workload, and other stress factors over time. Put yourself first with these tips for improving mental health:

- Practice self-care by making time for yourself.

- Get a good night's sleep.
- Use healthy coping mechanisms for stress, such as exercise or meditation.
- Listen to relaxing music.
- Avoid consuming large amounts of caffeine.

For more information about mental health or to seek help, speak to your physician.

Hand Hygiene Day

Hand Hygiene Day is May 5 every year. This day serves as a reminder of the importance of frequent and proper handwashing to keep people safe and healthy.

Follow these five steps every time you wash your hands:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water, turn off the tap and apply soap.
2. Rub your hands together to lather the soap on the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails.
3. Continue scrubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse your hands under running water until all the soap is gone.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.





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. Unsurprisingly, as plants bloom and neighbors cut their grass more frequently, people with allergies nationwide start sniffing and sneezing. Further, mold growth occurs indoors and outdoors, so it's almost impossible to escape these seasonal allergy triggers.

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 control the spread of pollen in your home. Utilize washable indoor rugs to remove allergens easily.
- 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 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.



Seasonal Allergy Symptoms

Every person is sensitive to different allergens at varying levels. You may be experiencing symptoms of seasonal allergies if you notice the following:

- Congestion and sinus pressure
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Itchy throat, nose and eyes