

## Seasonal Allergies Attack the Eye!

Seasonal allergies affect more than 35 million Americans each year and can have a tremendously negative impact on an individual's quality of life. Tree pollens in April and May, grass pollens in June and July and mold spores and weed pollens in July and August equal a five-month attack of eye-irritating allergens.

The combination of reproducing flowers and fungi with human antibodies makes for some awful allergy attacks each spring. Plant pollen and mold spores initiate the allergic response when they come in contact with the mucous membranes in the eyes, nose and lungs. Antibodies called immunoglobulin react by activating mast cell, which release chemicals, including histamine, to attack what it believes is an threat to the body. Thus, allergy symptoms appear. Spring and summer allergy episodes can be a bigger problem than chronic varieties. Drier air and exploding springtime pollen counts wreak havoc on the itchy, inflamed ocular surface. Seasonal allergic sufferers usually endure a combination of ocular itching, inflammation, watering and redness of the eyes. Ocular itching is the most distinguishing feature when seasonal allergic episodes occur. Some symptoms of seasonal allergies are also quite similar to dry eye symptoms. If you have seasonal allergy symptoms it is important to see your Eye M.D. for a visual examination to help rule out dry eye.

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