



**motion picture
pioneers
assistance
fund**

SOCIAL SERVICES CORNER

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THE ALLERGY SEASON AGAIN

Question: Spring is here again, and so is my hay fever. Could it be getting worse as I get older? Plus, I take medication for other things, and I am reluctant to add another one for the allergies. What do you think?

Answer: Allergic rhinitis is the clinical term describing nasal irritation and inflammation commonly known as hay fever (which isn't caused by hay and is not accompanied by a fever). This may make a person feel congested or drippy with mucus. Your first question is about aging with allergies. Allergies in adults may be underdiagnosed and therefore under-treated in older patients. It is not necessarily your hay fever that is getting worse with age. It could be that your nasal passages are experiencing age-related changes, such as dryness that makes your normal allergic rhinitis feel worse.

As for the second part of your question, it is true that allergic rhinitis can be treated with a number of medications, but it also may be the result of using others. For example, some blood pressure medications have been known to cause hay fever-like symptoms. Over-the-counter medications have the

risks of drug interactions just as much as prescription medicines do, so consult your primary doctor or ask for a referral to an allergist if you are concerned about drug interactions.

To avoid adding a medication to your regimen, particularly if your symptoms are short-lived, consider non-drug alternatives. The first alternative is to try to avoid exposure to the allergen. Pollen is heavy in springtime air, so keep windows closed as much as you can. Morning hours have the highest saturation, so limit outdoor time in the morning. Do not hang laundry outdoors. Keep nasal passages moist with steam, and drink plenty of water. Some folks swear by acupuncture for allergies, and some insurance covers it as well.

As we always state here, talk to your primary care physician. If you do not have one, ask your insurance or health care provider whether they have a nurse advice line.

Sources: "Allergies in the Aging," D'Arcy Little, MD, CCFP, *Geriatrics and Aging*, 2005; 8(5):52-53. "Allergic Rhinitis (Hay Fever)," American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, www.acaai.org. "Acupuncture Relieves Hay Fever Symptoms," Christian Nordqvist, *Medical News Today*.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

In one of his pictures Jimmy Cagney shoved a grapefruit into a girl's face, and it was considered shocking.

Now it's considered a diet.

—The Friars Club Encyclopedia of Jokes, H. Aaron Cohl

Laughter is known to boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, burn calories and release pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain.

Go Green!

Receive *Social Services Corner* by email.

Call (888) 994-3863, ext. 2370, or email info@wrmail.org.

Do you or does someone you know need our assistance? Call toll-free (888) 994-3863 or visit www.wrpioneers.org to find out more about our assistance programs.



The Motion Picture Pioneers Assistance Fund is a program of the Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Foundation.



HOME SAFETY



It's springtime, and we want to throw open our windows to the world, shake off the winter and do our "spring cleaning."

This year, turn your spring cleaning into a spring safety checkup too!

Take a look around the outside of your home. Fires from home grilling are a leading source of burn injuries and property damage in America. Grills should be on even ground. Whether you use propane or coals, properly extinguish them. Hoses left in the yard are trip hazards, and pooled water attracts mosquitoes. Loose pavers, walkways and cracked pavement are also dangerous.

Now investigate the indoors for hazards. Underwriters Laboratories, the people who test the safety of thousands of everyday products, offers a fun and easy checklist called "Commit a Minute: 100

Things to Make Your Home Safer" on their website www.safetyathome.com. The list includes ideas such as using a step stool and never a chair when testing smoke detector batteries. Make sure to unplug small appliances when they are not in use. Tighten handrails, or better yet—install them where needed. Furnace filters should be changed every few months, and dryer lint filters need to be cleaned every use.

Get a second opinion! Ask someone you trust to do a walk-through to look for slippery rugs, loose tiles and other floor hazards. Check indoor and outdoor lighting, expired medications and food items, and cleanliness of surfaces and the air. Check that all sinks, showers and toilets are working and that the water heater is set to 120 degrees or lower.

Of course the greatest safety measure you can take is YOU! Be aware of your surroundings. Be mindful of your limitations. Be smart. Being safe at home year-round will surely keep a spring in your step!

Sources: National Safety Council, www.nsc.org. Grilling Safety Tips, <http://www.nfpa.org>.

A free booklet, "Healthy Aging," is available on our website at www.wrpioneers.org or by calling (888) 994-3863. The booklet includes information on staying fit, healthy diet, preventing falls, mental wellness, medication use, tests, checkups and shots.

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MPPAF'S NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Veterans Health Administration, www.VA.gov

The Veterans Health Administration is America's largest integrated health care system. Visit its website and select "Health Care" to locate hospitals, clinics and an online pharmacy or to research health topics.

National Medical Association, www.nmanet.org, (800) NMA-0554

The National Medical Association (NMA), founded in 1895, is a national membership association representing African American physicians. Visit its website to locate an NMA physician member.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“ You can look at half the guys' stomachs in the world, and you can see they don't know how to order for themselves. ”

—Will Rogers

To view our entire National Resource Directory, please visit www.wrpioneers.org.