

## It's Open Season on ALLERGIES



Approximately 35 million people in the United States suffer from seasonal allergies. Symptoms of seasonal allergies typically include sneezing; congestion; runny nose; and itchiness in the nose, throat, eyes, ears, or roof of the mouth. Allergy symptoms are frequently triggered by the body's reaction to mold spores and pollen, allergens that float in the air. In an allergic person, the immune system overreacts to the presence of allergens in the body by producing Immunoglobulin E, antibodies that cause cells to release chemicals, triggering an allergic reaction.



### Management of Seasonal Allergies

Although there is no cure for allergies, there are precautions you can take to minimize allergy symptoms. According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, by taking the following simple steps you can limit your exposure to pollen and molds.



- Stay indoors when pollen and mold counts are reported to be high.
- Keep windows closed at night and use air conditioning instead.



## BEE STINGS



insect  
bites

Warmer weather and associated activities bring the potential for your child to experience insect bites and bee, wasp, hornet and yellow jacket stings. Reactions to bites and stings vary according to a child's sensitivity to a certain insect's venom. Generally, children have mild reactions; however, children who are allergic to particular insect venom can experience severe symptoms that require emergency treatment.

### SEVERE SYMPTOMS

Bites and stings generally result in pain, redness, itching and swelling at the site of the sting. In some cases, children experience a more serious reaction. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends calling for help immediately if your child has any of these symptoms after being bitten or stung.

- Sudden difficulty in breathing

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- Avoid hanging sheets, towels and clothing outside to dry.
- Avoid mowing grass and raking leaves since both activities stir up allergens.
- When traveling by car, keep windows closed.
- During the height of pollen season, consider vacationing in a more pollen-free area.
- View updated, local pollen and mold levels from the National Allergy Bureau at [www.aaaai.org/nab](http://www.aaaai.org/nab).

## Treatment

In addition to limiting exposure to allergens, people who suffer from allergies generally benefit from treatment from an allergist or immunologist. These physicians can provide a diagnosis and treatment plan, and determine whether medication or a series of allergy shots is necessary.

If you suspect that you are suffering from seasonal allergies, consult a physician for diagnosis and treatment options.

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- Weakness, collapse or unconsciousness
- Hives or itching all over the body
- Extreme swelling near the eyes, lips, or penis that makes it difficult for the child to see, eat or urinate

Insect repellents are usually available over-the-counter. It is recommended that they be used minimally on babies and very

young children since they often contain DEET, a chemical not recommended for use in children under two months of age. The AAP states that parents and caregivers should not apply DEET-containing repellents more than once a day on older children. Additionally, the AAP recommends that, to prevent bites by mosquitoes, ticks, chiggers, fleas, and biting flies, repellents used in children over six months of age have 30 percent DEET, or 5 to 10 percent picaridin repellent, and be applied once before going outdoors.

## PREVENT BITES & STINGS

Limit the number of bug bites your child experiences by following the recommendations below from the AAP.

- Avoid areas where insects nest or congregate, such as garbage cans, stagnant pools of water, uncovered foods and sweets, and orchards and gardens where flowers are in bloom.
- When you know your child will be exposed to insects, dress him or her in long pants and a lightweight, long-sleeved shirt.
- Avoid dressing your child in clothing with bright colors or flowery prints, because they seem to attract insects.
- Don't use scented soaps, perfumes, or hair sprays on your child because they also are inviting to insects.

For more information on prevention and treatment of bites and stings, contact your child's pediatrician.



## Wellness College Speaker's Series

St. Luke's Institute for Health Education  
Emerson Auditorium

6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

(followed by a question and answer period)

### Three sessions:

Wednesday, April 25

Living with Chronic Back Pain

Tuesday, May 15

Treatment Options for Joint Disease and Arthritis

Thursday, June 14

What is Metabolic Syndrome?

Get the information you need during this series of lectures featuring a panel of expert physicians and other healthcare professionals. James Loomis, MD, will moderate each session. Free. Registration is required. To register, visit [stlukes-stl.com](http://stlukes-stl.com) or call 314-542-4848.

## WomenHeart® Support Group Meetings

Wednesdays, April 4, May 2, June 6,  
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WomenHeart is a free support group where attendees can share their unique experiences which can help them regain a sense of control, feel less alone, develop a positive outlook on life and find the strength to commit to lifestyle changes. No fee. To register, visit [stlukes-stl.com](http://stlukes-stl.com) or call 314-542-4848.



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