

# SPRING 2019 Healthy Together

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## Taming *Spring Allergies*

If you start sneezing or coughing at the first signs of spring, you may have spring allergies. Symptoms of spring allergies can vary from person to person. They can include coughing, sneezing, a runny nose, itchy or watery eyes or a sore throat.

Here is what you can do to feel better.

**Know the triggers.** Most spring allergies are caused by tree pollen. If your allergies continue through late spring into the summer, you may also be allergic to grass or weed pollen.

**See an allergy doctor.** If your allergies are severe, your doctor may suggest that you see a doctor who specializes in allergies, called an allergist. He or she can help you find out what causes your allergies and how to manage symptoms.

**Take medicine.** Several types of over-the-counter medicines offer allergy relief. These include antihistamines, decongestants and nasal sprays. Your doctor may also prescribe a nasal spray or eye drops.

**Start treatment early.** If you know you have spring allergies, start taking medicine 2 weeks before your symptoms typically begin.

**Consider allergy shots.** Another treatment option is allergy shots, also called immunotherapy. These shots

expose you to small amounts of the allergen over time, slowly reducing your symptoms.

**Check pollen counts.** This information is available in your local newspaper or on radio or television weather reports. Tree and grass pollens are usually at their highest levels in the evening.

**Beware of dry, hot, windy days.** This type of weather makes pollen counts soar.

**Keep pollen out of your home and car.** Keep windows and doors shut, and turn on the air conditioner.

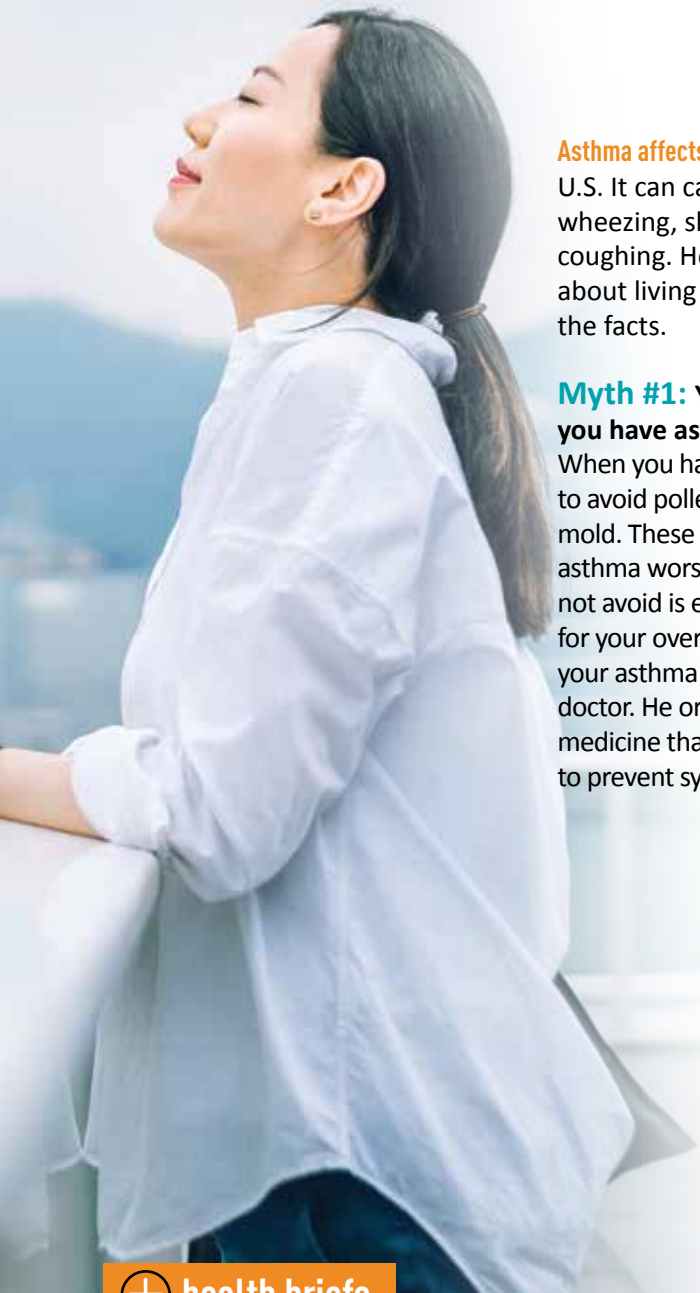
**Keep allergens off yourself.** During times of high pollen counts, change your clothes and wash your hair after spending time outside AND wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose when mowing or doing outside chores.



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Call ANYTIME you want  
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# 3 Big Myths About Asthma



**Asthma affects about 25 million people in the U.S.** It can cause tightness in the chest, wheezing, shortness of breath and coughing. Here are 3 common myths about living with asthma, along with the facts.

## **Myth #1: You should not exercise if you have asthma.**

When you have asthma, it is important to avoid pollen, cigarette smoke and mold. These things can make your asthma worse. But 1 thing you should not avoid is exercise, because it is good for your overall health. If exercise causes your asthma to flare up, talk with your doctor. He or she may prescribe a medicine that you inhale before exercise to prevent symptoms.

## **Myth #2: You only need to take asthma medicine during an asthma attack.**

It is true that you need to take quick-relief, or “rescue,” medicines when you are having an asthma attack. But your doctor may also prescribe long-term control medicine. This is medicine that you take every day. It helps prevent asthma attacks from happening in the first place.

## **Myth #3: Asthma comes and goes.**

Asthma is a chronic condition, which means it is ongoing. So even when you feel well, your asthma is still there. The goal with treating asthma is to manage the disease so you have few, if any, symptoms. Work with your doctor, stick to your treatment plan and avoid triggers that can cause an asthma attack. While asthma will not go away, treatment can help keep your symptoms under control.

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## **+ health briefs**



### *Mark your calendar!*

If you are ready to quit smoking, take the first step. Set a quit date that will mark your first smoke-free day. Then work with your doctor to take the next steps to help you quit.

### *Be more active!*

The American College of Sports Medicine offers this easy way for you to move more each day. Stand up and move when talking on your cellphone.



### *Eat a little better!*

If your favorite food is high in fat, sugar or calories, do not try to give it up completely. Just eat smaller amounts less often. Then balance it with smart choices for the rest of your meal.



# Planning for the Future

It can be difficult to think about the care you will want in the future and at the end of your life. But if you make no decision, your family members may need to guess what you would want. Instead, consider making some choices now. This can help you and your family members be at peace with the decisions that are made.

**Advance directives** convey how you want to be cared for if you are unable to make medical decisions or express your wishes. They are legal documents. There are 3 important types of advance directives:

1. A **living will** outlines the type of medical care you want to receive. It gives specific instructions about treatment, such as the use of invasive ventilation or tube feedings.
2. A **durable power of attorney for health care** lets you appoint someone to make medical care decisions for you if you are unable to. Choose someone you trust, like a family member or close friend.
3. A **do not resuscitate (DNR) order** states that you do not want to be revived if you stop breathing or you go into cardiac arrest. The DNR order must be signed by a doctor.

Here are some other important things to know about advance directives:

- You can write your own advance directives or get help from an attorney.
- Experts suggest that you discuss advance directives with your doctor. He or she can fully explain what it means to accept or reject various forms of medical care.
- Advance directives remain in effect unless you prepare new ones.
- A directive prepared in 1 state may not be valid in another state. Consider preparing 1 for each state where you spend a lot of time.

It can be difficult to plan for the future when you would rather focus on the present. But giving thought to what lies ahead can help give you and your family members peace of mind.



## Still Unsure?

Find out more about how to plan for your future care. Visit our online educational materials at [www.ohpcc.org](http://www.ohpcc.org), then search for "advance directives."





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Call **1-800-562-4620** to discuss any of the topics in this newsletter or any other health issues. Visit our website at **www.OHPCC.org**.

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# Are you *Brushing* the Right Way?

**The American Dental Association (ADA)** recommends that you brush twice a day with a soft-bristled brush, using an ADA-approved fluoride toothpaste.

To get the best results, the ADA suggests that you hold your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to your gums. Then brush the outer, inside and chewing surfaces of all teeth. Tilt the brush vertically and make several small up-and-down strokes on the back of your front teeth. And do not forget to brush your tongue to banish bacteria and bad breath.

Keep at it until you get the job done. Most Americans do not

spend nearly long enough brushing, research finds. Aim for at least 3 minutes, which is about the length of 1 song on your morning radio station.

**Maintain Good Oral Hygiene**

Brushing is just 1 critical part of an overall oral health care routine. To keep your teeth and gums healthy:

- Floss or use other tools designed to clean between teeth daily
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- Visit your dentist regularly for cleanings and exams

