COLUMBIA ALLERGY

Cutting-Edge, Personalized Medicine

NEWSLETTER

MEET DR. UMESH SAB

Dr. Umesh Sab proudly offers allergy, primary care and rheumatology services for our patients at the Redwood City clinic.

Dr. Sab did his allergy and rheumatology training at Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation, La Jolla, University of California San Diego and UCLA. Dr. Sab is board certified in Internal Medicine, Allergy and Immunology and Rheumatology. He is a Fellow of American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology and the American College of Rheumatology.

He has been practicing in the community for over 36 years and is an active member on the professional staff of Sequoia Hospital in Redwood City. Dr. Sab has been the Director of Continuing Medical Education at Sequoia Hospital for over 10 years.

ARE AT-HOME FOOD ALLERGY TESTS ACCURATE?

Most at-home food sensitivity tests screen for IgG antibodies to a specified list of foods. In comparison, allergists are screening for IgE antibodies to make the diagnosis of a food allergy. There are 4 types of hypersensitivity reactions, and a “true food allergy” falls under the category of Type I reactions, that are mediated by IgE antibodies. This means that the body develops IgE antibodies for a specific substance such as peanuts and uses this antibody to protect itself against exposure to the substance. The at-home food sensitivity tests are unable to detect a true food allergy since it does not screen for IgE antibodies to the foods. The American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology emphasize that research has not proven that removal of foods that had a positive IgG response will reduce any symptoms of food sensitivity or allergies. Therefore, if you want to determine whether or not you have a food allergy, the most accurate and scientifically tested option is to obtain testing through skin prick testing or a blood test from your provider at Columbia Allergy.

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MEET OUR RECENT OIT GRADUATES FROM BELLEVUE

Graduating from oral immunotherapy (OIT) means that a patient with severe food allergies has successfully completed the desensitization protocol and has reached a maintenance dose. These patients no longer have to come in for weekly updosing appointments!

MEET JORDAN

Jordan successfully Completed OIT (oral immunotherapy) to peanut and hazelnut on February 5th! Congratulations on your big achievement!

MEET ANAND

Congratulations to Anand for successfully graduating from OIT to cashew, pistachio and peanut on March 10th!

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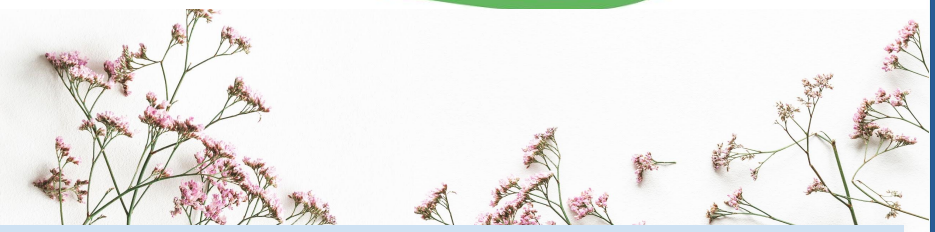
SPRING POLLEN COUNTS



As spring approaches, tree pollen counts are on the rise and a new seasonal allergy season has begun. However, in some areas, patients may be experiencing symptoms from weeds, grasses, and molds. The American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology have certified pollen counting stations that are part of the National Allergy Bureau. These stations provide daily updates on pollen and mold counts throughout the US.

- Bay Area Pollen Counts
  - Tree Pollen Counts - HIGH
    - Top species found: Pine, Oak, Juniper, Cedar
  - Weed Pollen Counts - Not Present
  - Grass Pollen Counts - Not Present
  - Mold Count - Low
    - Top species found: Cladosporium, Ascospores, Basidiospores
- Washington/Oregon Pollen Counts
  - Tree Pollen Counts - Moderate
    - Top species found: Juniper, Cedar, Elm, Alder, Pine, Oak
  - Weed Pollen Counts - Low
    - Top species found: Sheep Sorrel, Dock, Nettle Family, Goosefoot, Lamb's Quarters, Pigweed, Amaranth, Saltbrush, Russian Thistle
  - Grass Pollen Counts - HIGH
    - Top species found: grass mix
  - Mold Count - Not Present
- Idaho Pollen Counts
  - Tree Pollen Counts - Not present
  - Weed Pollen Counts - HIGH
    - Top species found: Sage, Wormwood
  - Grass Pollen Counts - Not Present
  - Mold Count - Moderate
    - Top species found: Cladosporium, Alternaria, Smut, Myxomycetes

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COVID CORNER

What's up with the new COVID variants? What are the most important things for people to know about these new variants?

Most viruses mutate over time in order to improve their chances of surviving as human bodies learn to fight off the virus. Now that COVID has been spreading throughout the world for more than a year, we are starting to see new variants of the virus. As these variants emerge, things such as travel between countries can lead to a spread of the variants. The CDC reports known mutations of the virus that were identified in the United Kingdom (B.1.1.7 lineage), South Africa (B.1.351 lineage), and Brazil (P.1 lineage). These variants have been found in the United States as of December 2020 and January of this year. Scientists continue to analyze the virus and what these variants mean for transmission of the virus, the course of the illness, and treatment of the illness. As of right now, the CDC has reported over 1500 persons who have contracted one of the 3 known variants. It is important to know that these variants may be able to spread more quickly (B.1.1.7 lineage & P.1 lineage), may cause milder or more severe disease (B.1.1.7 lineage - potential increased risk of death), may not be as easily detected by the tests created to detect the original strain of the virus, may have decreased response to current treatments (B.1.351 lineage) and can potentially cause illness in persons who have built natural immunity or who have been vaccinated against the original strain (P.1. lineage).

What are the symptoms that come up from the new COVID variants?

As of right now, there are no reports of different symptoms. These new COVID variants still induce the same symptoms as the original virus that was detected. However, we may see quicker onset of symptoms or more rapid transmission of the virus due to these variants. These symptoms include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle aches, body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Some reports are showing that the most common symptoms presenting in each variant may vary slightly, but as of right now we do not know of any new symptoms caused by the variants.

What do new variants mean in terms of protecting yourself and your community from COVID? What extra precautions should you take?

It is crucial to continue to practice good hand hygiene, restrict travel, especially outside of the country, keep social distancing, and continue to wear a mask when within 6 feet of others. These precautions should be practiced even if you have received the full vaccine series or developed immunity after an active infection since there is potential to not be protected against a new variant.

What else would you like readers to know about the new variants and their symptoms?

Staying up to date on accurate information from the CDC instead of receiving false information from social media is another great way to keep yourself well informed to best protect yourself. In addition, new variants do not mean that the original strain of the virus has disappeared. Continue to monitor for the symptoms mentioned above, and be aware that these new variants may spread more easily and quickly from person to person. The CDC website is the best place to find updated information on which variants are found in the United States, the number of cases associated with the new variants, and if there are any new symptoms. The current vaccines are likely to be at least partially effective against most variants. For these reasons, we still recommend vaccination to protect yourself from contracting COVID.

IN THE NEWS

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[All The Ways The New COVID-19 Variants Differ From The Original Strain]

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[If You Have Winter Allergies, Here's Why and What Experts Recommend]

BUSTLE

[Here's Why It's Hard To Tell If It's COVID Or Food Poisoning]

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Columbia Allergy Clinic has 16 convenient locations across state lines in Fremont, Oakland, Redwood City, Sunnyvale, San Mateo, California; Clackamas and Gresham, Oregon; Bellevue, Fishers Landing, Longview, and Salmon Creek, Washington; and Eagle, Idaho.

https://www.columbiaallergy.com/