

JUNE NEWSLETTER

CHECK OUT OUR NEW PATIENT HANDOUTS!

Are you considering one of our allergy desensitization treatments or are you looking for more detailed information about one of the services we offer? Check out your local Columbia

Allergy Clinic for our new service brochures. These brochures provide some background information on each service and what to expect during your test or treatment. We also have flyers available for each location that outlines who the providers, which conditions are treated, and which services are offered.

We also have electronic versions of these handouts which can be found under the services tab by clicking on the Download Our Flyer button!



DOWNLOAD OUR FLYER (PDF)



CURRENT POLLEN COUNTS

Check out these updates for the pollen counts in your area for the month of June. For the most up to date information, you can also head to the American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology website where they have certified pollen counting stations that are part of the National Allergy Bureau.

- California Bay Area Pollen Counts
 - Tree Pollen Counts - Moderate
 - Top species found: Pine, Olive, Oak
 - Weed Pollen Counts - Moderate
 - all types
 - Grass Pollen Counts - Moderate
 - all types
 - Mold Count - Low
 - Top species found: Cladosporium, Smuts, Ascospores
- Washington/Oregon Pollen Counts
 - Tree Pollen Counts - Moderate
 - Top species found: Juniper family, Cedar, Pine family, all other tree pollens
 - Weed Pollen Counts - Not Present
 - Grass Pollen Counts - High
 - Top species found: All mixes currently found
 - Mold Count - Not Present
- Idaho Pollen Counts
 - Tree Pollen Counts - Moderate
 - Mulberry, Ash, all other types found
 - Weed Pollen Counts - Not Present
 - Grass Pollen Counts - Not Present
 - Mold Count - Not Present

HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT OVER THE COUNTER ALLERGY MEDICATION

When you are suffering from symptoms caused by allergic rhinitis, it can be difficult to pick the right over the counter medication for your symptoms. The pharmacy aisles are overwhelmingly filled with oral antihistamines, decongestants, nasal spray, and much more. Below are some tips to help guide you in choosing the right medication for your symptoms.



Types of medications include:

- Oral allergy medications
 - Oral antihistamines come in non-drowsy formulations such as Cetirizine (Zyrtec) and Loratadine (Claritin) as well as formulations that can make you drowsy like diphenhydramine (Benadryl). Antihistamines are a great option for alleviating symptoms and preventing future symptoms from occurring. Non-sedating oral antihistamines like Zyrtec and Claritin can be taken once a day to alleviate generalized allergy symptoms. Sedating antihistamines are not preferred for daily treatment of symptoms, but can be a great option to take at night if symptoms are interfering with sleep.
 - Oral decongestants include medications like SUDAFED (pseudoephedrine). These are a good option if you are suffering from severe nasal or ear congestion, but should only be used short term (several days at a time) for symptomatic management. Oral decongestants can cause a lot of side effects and should not be used in patients with heart disease, high blood pressure, and more.



- Nasal Sprays

- Different types of nasal sprays include antihistamines, steroids, decongestants, mast cell stabilizer, and saline.
 - Steroids (PREFERRED OPTION): these nasal sprays work to reduce inflammation by reducing the immune system's response to the pollen when it comes in contact with the nasal passage.
 - Examples: Beclomethasone (Beconase), Budesonide (Rhinocort), Fluticasone (Flonase), Flunisolide, Mometasone (Nasonex), Triamcinolone (Nasacort)
 - Intranasal steroids are the preferred form of treatment. Steroid nasal sprays are considered first line because they are the most potent agent available, the most effective medication to be used alone, and are especially helpful for relieving nasal congestion. They also have a low side effective profile and can be used long-term and for immediate symptom relief.
 - Antihistamines (NEXT BEST OPTION): these nasal sprays block histamine, which is an inflammatory mediator that your body releases to protect itself when your body's immune system recognizes a substance like pollen as foreign. Histamine causes swelling of the tissues which as a result leads to the classic allergy symptoms, so blocking this mediator prevents the symptoms from occurring.
 - Examples: Azelastine (Astelin) and Olopatadine (Patanase)
 - Antihistamines are the next best option. These medications can reduce symptoms, but often require treatment with more than one agent, have increased side effects, and nasal decongestants can only be used for a few days at a time.
 - Decongestants (ALTERNATIVE OPTION): these nasal sprays constrict the blood vessels in the lining of the nasal passages to reduce swelling.
 - Phenylephrine (Neo-Synephrine), Oxymetazoline (Afrin, Sinex)
 - Side effects of this time of nasal spray include rebound congestion. Rebound congestion is when you develop even more congestion and swelling of the nasal passage. Nasal decongestants restrict blood flow to the nasal tissues and when this happens for too long it can cause tissue damage which triggers more swelling. Decongestant nasal sprays should be limited to 3-4 days of consecutive use to help prevent this side effect from occurring.

- Mast Cell Stabilizer (ALTERNATIVE OPTION): this nasal spray prevents the release of histamine and other inflammatory mediators to prevent swelling of the tissues, and therefore alleviating symptoms. These are not effective for immediate relief of symptoms, but can help to prevent symptoms.
 - Cromolyn (NasalCrom)
 - This nasal spray is meant to be used prophylactically and not for immediate symptom relief. This is a good option for patients who have tried and failed steroid and antihistamine nasal sprays or as an adjunct treatment to prevent future symptoms from occurring.
- Saline (GREAT FOR ALL): this nasal spray is essentially salt water and functions to moisturize irritated nasal passages.
 - Saline nasal spray can be used by everyone! This is a safe option with almost no side effects and can help to provide comfort for irritated or dry nasal passages.
- Eye Drops
 - These medications are helpful for eye symptoms such as itching, redness, burning, watering, and irritation of eyes. Different types of over the counter eye drops include antihistamines, lubricating, and decongestants. These medications function very similarly to the nasal spray medications listed above.
 - Antihistamine eye drop examples: Ketotifen (Zaditor), Azelastine hydrochloride (Optivar), Emedastine difumarate (Emadine), Levocabastine (Livostin) - can quickly ease symptoms but may cause dryness.
 - Lubricating eye drops - typically don't have a medication listed in the name, can be used daily to help flush out irritants and add moisture to the eyes.
 - Decongestant eye drop example: Naphazoline HCL (Clear Eyes), Phenylephrine HCL (Refresh), Oxymetazoline HCL (Visine) - helpful for red eyes, should only be used short term due to risk of rebound congestion or redness.

If your allergy symptoms do not improve with the use of over-the-counter medications, we recommend making an appointment with your allergist to discuss a new treatment plan that may include prescription medications and allergy testing. Treatment options can also include allergy shots, our cutting edge Precision Immune Targeting (ultrasound-guided intralymphatic immunotherapy), or sublingual immunotherapy (SLIT).

IN THE NEWS

verywell health

[Will Your Child Develop Asthma? Researchers Identify 3 Major Risk Factors](#)

Parents

[Is It Allergies or a Cold? Here's How to Tell the Difference](#)

Health[®]

[Bee Sting Treatments: What to Know, and When to See a Doctor](#)

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Cutting-Edge, Personalized Medicine

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.