Love spring, but not the allergies it brings?

Spring ushers in warmer weather, longer days and budding trees. It can also bring seasonal allergies. Sneezing, itchy eyes and coughing hit children and adults alike. Finding a treatment method that works well can bring relief — so you can get outside and enjoy the fresh air.

What causes seasonal allergies

Allergies are a reaction (or overreaction) by your immune system to a foreign substance, like pollen, a bee sting or certain foods. When your body is exposed to something you’re allergic to, it tries to remove the allergen from your system. That results in allergy symptoms including:

- Sneezing
- Itchiness
- Coughing
- Runny nose
- Hives
- Swelling
- Anaphylaxis (a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction)

“For most people, seasonal allergies cause mild symptoms like sneezing and runny nose,” says Joseph Lobrutto, PharmD, pharmacy manager at Geisinger Community Medical Center. But for some, symptoms can be life-threatening. In those cases, an EpiPen® is often the best form of treatment.

“In general, however, allergy medications or treatments like shots or drops can help lessen the effects of allergens,” says Lobrutto.

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Fresh corn salad with tomatoes and basil

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Geisinger clinical dietitian Paulette Mordente, RDN, offers this fresh, simple salad showcasing corn:

**Ingredients:**
- 4 ears of corn
- ¾ cup halved grape tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons fresh, chopped basil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar

**Instructions:**
1. Add corn to boiling water, then reduce heat to medium and cook, covered, for 8 minutes. Remove and run under cold water to cool quickly.
2. Meanwhile, combine remaining ingredients in a medium bowl. Cut the corn off the cob and add to the tomato mixture. Toss gently. Makes 4 servings.

Learn more: geisinger.org/phe
Keep an eye on your prescription glasses purchase

Planning on getting new glasses soon? Be aware that some offices may try to “upsell” you glasses and add features you don’t want or need. Follow these tips to avoid overpaying for your prescription eyeglasses.

- Research the prescription glasses places where you live. Glasses can cost anywhere from $80 to $1,000. Make sure you’re getting the best deal you can.
- Check the company’s online reviews. Be especially wary of buying from an online retailer since you can’t see and touch what you’re purchasing.
- Ask your neighbors, family and friends for their recommendations. Find out the cost of their glasses purchase for an idea of what the office charges.
- Know what you want to pay before you go. Decide what your budget is before your purchase. Bring a friend or family member with you to help you stick to your budget.
- Don’t get hung up on designer frames. Many attractive styles cost less because you’re not paying for a brand name.

If you’re ready for new specs, do your homework first. Stick to your budget and don’t be afraid to leave without buying anything. To report fraud, contact the Geisinger Special Investigations Unit at fa@thehealthplan.com or call 800-292-1627.

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