

It's spring in Michigan, and the state's trees and flowers are bursting into blooms thanks to unseasonably warm temperatures this year.

The thermometer is already climbing into the 70s. That's about 20 degrees warmer than the average for this time of year, according to National Weather Service data.

To many, it's a beautiful time of the year leading into the summer months. But for others, it's a living nightmare.

Seasonal allergies mean a stuffed nose and watery eyes amongst other symptoms. It can cause a serious headache, and the impacts of climate change are only making it worse.

What causes seasonal allergies?

Seasonal allergies are typically caused by pollen, a substance created by different types of trees, grasses and weeds.

NIH MedlinePlus Magazine stated tree pollen from birch, maple, oak and elm trees is extremely common in the spring, as well as from grass that sheds pollen in late spring.

While harmless, pollen can cause allergy symptoms when the body mistakes the substance for something dangerous and tries to fight it off.

Mold spores also contribute to seasonal allergies. It can also become a year-round allergy for those living in high-moisture environments.

What are symptoms of seasonal allergies?

Sullivan said it's often difficult to identify spring allergies as the metro Detroit area is currently wrapping up the cold season.

"Right now, it's a little bit tricky because we're getting out of that typical upper respiratory cold season," he said. "There's a lot of overlap where people think they might have a cold or something but really, it's the beginning of allergies."

Sullivan said common symptoms of seasonal allergies include sneezing, congestion, watery eyes, runny nose and itchy eyes, nose, or mouth.

How can allergy symptoms be prevented?

According to Mayo Clinic, they recommend limiting exposure to allergy triggers, keeping indoor air clean, trying over-the-counter medications, and taking extra precautions when pollen counts are high.

Many steps can be taken to limit exposure to allergy triggers. This includes staying indoors on dry and windy days when pollen levels are high, avoiding outdoor chores like mowing the lawn and gardening, removing clothes worn outside upon entering the home and showering, and drying clothing items inside rather than outdoors.

Furthermore, the air inside a home can be kept clean by closing windows and doors and using air conditioning. The air conditioner should use high-efficiency filters and have regular maintenance checks.

There are plenty of nonprescription medications to ease allergy symptoms such as oral antihistamines and corticosteroid nasal sprays including Zyrtec, Allegra, Claritin and Flonase.

Sullivan also recommended similar treatment options with a focus on nasal steroids and antihistamines.

Treating Your Seasonal Allergies

A number of over-the-counter and prescription medications can help you treat your seasonal allergy symptoms.



NASAL SPRAY

Can clear congestion quickly but not recommended for long-term use.



DECONGESTANTS



ANTIHISTAMINES



ALLERGY SHOTS



EYE DROPS