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# Wellness Works

APRIL 2014

## Achoo!

Spring is in the air, and for many that means allergies and asthma flare-ups.

Allergies can cause sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes, and a general feeling of tiredness that sometimes can last for weeks or months. Allergy symptoms can sometimes lead to asthma, which may present more serious health problems.

- An allergy is when the body's natural defense system overreacts to allergens, like pollen, dust, foods, latex, and other triggers.
- Asthma is a breathing problem with symptoms of wheezing, coughing, chest tightness, and shortness of breath.

The following tips may help manage both allergies and asthma.

**Drink More Water.** If you're stuffed up from seasonal allergies, drinking water can thin mucus and help flush your system.

**Be Flexible.** Exercises like yoga and stretching also can teach you breathing techniques to help control allergies and asthma.

**Watch for Signs.** Don't confuse cold symptoms with allergies. Colds usually last 7-10 days and can cause a fever.

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### NURSE ADVICE LINES:

If you are covered by a CIS medical plan, you have access to a 24/7 Nurse Advice Line. Call anytime for assistance in managing an allergy, asthma, or cold condition.

Regence Advice 24: 800-267-6729

Kaiser Permanente: 503-813-2000 or 800-813-2000

503-763-3800 800-922-2684

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**Talk with your Doctor.** Your doctor can advise you about allergy testing to identify your triggers. Knowing what sets off an allergic reaction can help you take steps to avoid the irritant.

### Prevention strategies that can help you avoid springtime flare-ups or allergy triggers include:

- If you are affected by **pollen counts**: visit the Weather Channel to check the pollen count in your neighborhood.
- To minimize exposure to **dust & mites**: close windows, vacuum often, and consider filters for home ventilation systems.
- For **bug bites and stings**: don't wear scents or perfumes, avoid bright or floral clothing, don't stand near open garbage cans, and eat indoors.

## Happy Spring!

Email [healthybenefits@cisoregon.org](mailto:healthybenefits@cisoregon.org) to help you locate wellness and health resources for your situation.



### ONLINE RESOURCES, PROGRAM AND HEALTH INFORMATION

#### REGENCE MEMBERS:

[www.myRegence.com](http://www.myRegence.com), select Health News & Features and search for Allergies & Asthma (login required).

#### KAISER PERMANENTE MEMBERS:

[www.kp.org](http://www.kp.org), select Health & Wellness and then Conditions & Diseases.

### HEALTH COACHING

Personalized coaching can help you reach your health goals including tips on allergies and asthma.

#### KAISER PERMANENTE MEMBERS ONLY:

Call 866.862.4295 (Monday-Friday)

#### REGENCE OR KAISER PERMANENTE MEMBERS:

Call 888.493.5522 (Monday-Friday)

Coaching is provided by WellCall Wellness (partnered with Reliant Behavioral Health EAP).

### Need more help or information?

Check out CIS Benefits website, call 800.922.2684x3825, or email [healthybenefits@cisoregon.org](mailto:healthybenefits@cisoregon.org)

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