

GOOD NEIGHBOR SCRIPT™

INSPIRATION FOR LIVING WELL FROM *GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY*



5 Ways to Minimize Spring Allergies

Spring is finally here, bringing rising temperatures, blooming plants and longer days. If you're one of the more than 50 million Americans who suffer from allergies each year, you may also be dealing with a runny nose, a cough or even a general feeling of sluggishness. That's because spring is the season when pollen, mold and dust are released into the air.

If you're one of the many allergy sufferers who also experience more serious side effects, such as wheezing, asthma, difficulty breathing and hives, seasonal allergies can compromise your well-being. As an allergy sufferer, you don't have to stay inside all season, but you do need to take precautions to protect your health. Following a few steps to prepare for allergy season can set you up for relief throughout the spring.

1. Switch up your schedule

If you have allergic asthma or hay fever, then your symptoms will flare up when pollen counts are high. To limit the severity of reactions, experts from the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America say to avoid outdoor activity during peak pollen times. Pollen counts typically rise in the morning between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m. and reach their maximum around noon. Counts begin to fall around midday, hitting a low in the early evening.

Structure your schedule so that you spend the most time outside before dawn or in the late afternoon and early evening. Rainy, cool, windless days may not seem like a pleasant time to be outdoors, but pollen is lowest under these conditions.

2. Dress to protect yourself

Wearing a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses can help shield your hair and face from allergens, say doctors from Yale Health. It's a smart idea to change your clothes and shower when you come back inside. Rinsing pollen from your body can help control your sinus symptoms and protect your family, too.

3. Allergy-proof your home

Although you may be tempted to open the windows as the weather gets warmer, doing so may aggravate your allergies. The National Library of Medicine suggests cooling your home with air conditioning instead. Changing your air-conditioner filters frequently and using a vacuum with HEPA filtration can also help keep pollen at bay. Controlling mold, pet dander and dust mites is also important, says the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI). Wipe down surfaces in your home and fix leaks to limit the spread of mold. Doctors at the Cleveland Clinic recommend washing your sheets at least once per week to remove allergens that lurk in fabrics. Use hot water that's at least 130 F (54.4 C) to kill dust mites.

4. Update your medicine cabinet and get a head start on symptoms

Your medicine cabinet should be on your list of spots to sort through during spring cleaning. Throw away expired allergy medications. You should also make an appointment to see your doctor so that you can get updated prescriptions. Allergists from the AAAAI recommend starting medication two to three weeks before your symptoms typically start. Taking antihistamines well in advance helps block inflammation, which means fewer allergy symptoms.

5. Eat the right foods

Researchers at John Hopkins University found that increasing your intake of antioxidant-rich foods like fruits, vegetables and green tea can help ease inflammation in the nasal passages. Eating plenty of omega-3 fatty acids, found naturally in foods like salmon, walnuts, chia seeds, eggs and brussel sprouts, can also protect against allergies and asthma, according to a study in the journal *Allergology International*.

Dealing with allergy symptoms can interfere with enjoying your life. With a few simple steps and a little advanced preparation, you can stay healthy this spring and minimize your symptoms all season long.

Health & Fitness

Should a Pet Be Part of Your Wellness Plan?

Dogs and cats are more than just pets — they're part of the family. They enhance your life by providing utter devotion, happiness and unconditional love. But did you know that your canine and feline companions are also beneficial to your health?

They're heart smart. Man's best friend touches our hearts in more ways than one. Living with a pet, especially a dog, can reduce your risk of heart disease, according to the American Heart Association. Compared to non-dog owners, dog owners have lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels, regardless of their diet, their body mass index or whether or not they smoke, according to a large study. Researchers don't know why exactly, but there's evidence that simply petting a dog lowers blood pressure.

They provide emotional support. Pet ownership can also contribute to emotional well-being. Research has shown that pets can provide comfort, promote a sense of accomplishment, relieve loneliness, increase social interactions and reduce depression. Pets can provide meaningful social support, which impacts overall well-being, according to several studies by Miami University. Their researchers found that pet owners experience increased self-esteem and happiness, and less loneliness and depression, compared to non-pet owners.

They're a great workout partner. Taking your dog on a daily walk can help you get off the couch and get fit. Older adults get added health mileage from the miles they put in with their pooch. Seniors who walk their dog had lower body mass index, reported fewer doctor visits and engaged in more exercise and social activities, according to a University of Missouri study. People who walk their dog get an average of 30 minutes more exercise per day than those who aren't dog walkers.



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Prep Time
10 minutes

Cook Time
25 minutes

Total Time
24 to 40 minutes

Serves
2

April Recipe

Brown Rice Congee with Edamame, Mushrooms and Ginger

Also known as jook, this savory Chinese rice porridge scores high on the comfort-food meter. The rice breaks down over the long cooking time, releasing starches that render the dish creamy—a blank slate as far as seasonings go. Because we use brown rice instead of white, this version gets a nutrition boost. Although the bran and germ on the brown rice mean less starch is released than with white rice, the end result is still velvety and full of flavor.

Ingredients

- 1-inch piece organic fresh ginger
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup quick-cooking long-grain brown rice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup organic mirepoix (4 tablespoons chopped onions, 2 tablespoons chopped carrots, 2 tablespoons celery)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup shelled edamame
- 2 ounces organic shiitake mushrooms
- $\frac{1}{4}$ pound organic broccoli
- 3 organic scallions
- 1 tablespoon gluten-free tamari
- 1 tablespoon black sesame seeds
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Neutral oil

Kids Can!

- Measure the ginger.
- Measure the water for the rice.
- Garnish the congee.

Tools

Fine-toothed grater (optional), small bowl, medium sauce pot with a lid, small frying pan

Instructions

1. Start the congee

- Grate or peel and finely chop enough ginger to measure 2 teaspoons.

In a medium sauce pot, combine the ginger, rice and 2 cups water. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, cover and cook, stirring occasionally to prevent the rice from sticking to the bottom of the pot, until the rice has softened, 15 to 18 minutes.

While the water heats and the rice cooks, prepare the vegetables.

2. Cook the vegetables

When the rice has softened, add the mirepoix and edamame to the pot and cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are tender and the rice has softened to a porridge-like consistency, 10 to 12 minutes longer.

While the vegetables cook, prepare the remaining ingredients.

3. Prep and cook the remaining ingredients; finish the congee

- Remove any woody stems from the mushrooms; thinly slice the caps.
- Cut the broccoli into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch florets; trim any coarse stems.
- Trim the root ends from the scallions; thinly slice the scallions on the diagonal for garnish.

In a small frying pan over medium heat, warm 1 to 2 tablespoons oil until hot but not smoking. Add the mushrooms in a single layer and cook until browned on one side, 3 to 4 minutes. Turn the mushrooms and cook until browned on the other side, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl and season to taste with up to half the tamari (set aside the remaining tamari for serving).

When the rice has reached a porridge-like consistency and the vegetables are tender, add the broccoli to the pot and cook, stirring occasionally, until crisp-tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from the heat and season to taste with salt and pepper.

4. Serve

Transfer the congee to individual bowls. Top with the mushrooms, scallions, sesame seeds and as much of the remaining tamari as you like and serve.



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Ask a Pharmacist How Should I Dispose of Old, Expired or Unused Medications?

Expired or unused medications should be disposed of as soon as possible to prevent harm to yourself or other individuals, as well as to reduce the risk of drug diversion.



Elizabeth Louthan

Pharmacist
Goodykoontz Drug Store
Bluefield, West Virginia

Outside the home. National prescription drug take-back programs sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Administration are the best way to dispose of unwanted or unneeded medication. Some communities also host annual medication take-back days in partnership with local law enforcement or have permanent programs in place, such as drop boxes for old medication at local businesses.

At home. Another option for safe medication disposal is placing it in the household trash. However, to prevent diversion, the medication should be placed in a sealed container such as a resealable sandwich bag along with an undesirable substance like coffee grounds, cat litter or dirt. Enough liquid should then be added to create a paste before disposal. There is also a small list of medications that can be disposed of by flushing down the toilet or sink, but some medications like Suboxone film strips and fentanyl patches pose a safety risk because minimal exposure can be extremely dangerous. The full list of medications included in this category can be found on the Food and Drug Administration's website at FDA.gov.

If you have questions about safely disposing of a specific medication, your local *Good Neighbor Pharmacy* pharmacist is always available to help.

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Local Love

Fox Drug of Torrance

TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA

How many years has Fox Drug of Torrance been in business?

Fox Drug was established in 1948, and we purchased it in 1988. We celebrated 30 years in November.

What has been the most significant change within your pharmacy over the past five years?

The most important change within our pharmacy has been our focus on improving our patients' medication adherence.

"Being independent allows us to quickly respond to changes in the field of community pharmacy."

Sara Atallah
Pharmacist



What is your favorite part of owning an independent pharmacy?

My favorite part of owning a pharmacy is being able to change and respond to new challenges.

What role does your pharmacy play in your local community?

We are located in "old downtown Torrance" and participate in a lot of local activities. We are a member of the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Merchant Association.

What makes you unique, sets you apart from your competition?

Being independent allows us to quickly respond to changes in the field of community pharmacy. Our response to some of those changes includes offering special Rx packaging, auto-refills and refill reminders, free local prescription delivery and charge accounts with detailed itemized statements.

What unique health needs do you have in your community?

Torrance is the third largest city in Los Angeles County. Our patient population consists of mostly seniors, so it's important for us to offer heart and blood pressure management and a diabetes shop, and we have several immunizations on hand.

What does *Locally Loved* mean to you?

Not only am I married to a pharmacist, but also two of our children are pharmacists. We all manage our three stores in the South Bay as a group effort. We service a lot of families with second and third generations. Being local and *Locally Loved* means a lot. Word of mouth and referrals have helped us stay in business all these years, and hopefully will for years to come.