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Be prepared - hay fever season in full bloom

If you are one of the 25 per cent of Australians who suffer from spring allergies, be prepared – spring has sprung and the season of sneezing, runny noses and sore itchy eyes has definitely begun.

South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) immunologist and allergy expert, Professor Connie Katelaris, said people who suffered spring allergies should commence preventative treatment now.

“For some people, the onset of pollen-induced allergies can be debilitating and interfere with normal activities,” Prof Katelaris said.

“Asthma sufferers in particular, need to have their recommended medication and pay close attention to managing their condition.

“According to the NSW Asthma Foundation, allergies trigger asthma attacks in 60 to 90 per cent of children and in 50 per cent of adults.

“Pollen allergic people with chronic asthma should make sure they are using their preventer sprays regularly as prescribed.

“A chronically blocked nose due to hay fever or allergies can also affect sleep, which may add a general feeling of fatigue for sufferers at this time of year, so using a regular preventive nose spray can help,” she said.

Prof Katelaris said the most important factor was minimising exposure to pollen as this was the main cause of seasonal allergies. If symptoms are recurring and severe, seek a specialist consultation to discuss more long-term management such as immunotherapy which can be highly effective at reducing seasonal allergies.

Tips for Avoiding Allergies

- Consult your general practitioner physician about possible treatments and medication.
- Wash your hair and clothes regularly to remove pollen
- If you have pets, groom them regularly because they can bring pollen indoors.
- Try to stay indoors when the pollen count is reported to be high, and on windy days, keeping windows closed to prevent pollen from drifting into the home
- Avoid early morning physical activity if possible
- Keep car windows closed when travelling
- Leave the house when lawn mowing occurs