

Spring allergies or allergic rhinoconjunctivitis

If you frequently suffer from sneezing, a runny nose, an itchy nose or eyes, or irritated, watery eyes, it is highly likely that this is not a cold, but an allergic reaction.

This can occur particularly at the start of spring, due to increased pollen levels (**spring allergies**). It is a reaction that occurs when pollen comes into contact with the nose or eyes, causing inflammation of the mucous membranes and these symptoms.

In other people, these symptoms occur throughout the year, triggered by dust or animal dander. **Changes in temperature** can also cause these reactions, but in this case, it is not an allergy.

The types of **pollen** most likely to cause allergies are those from grasses (all types of grass, cereals, reeds, etc.), as well as olive trees, pellitory, plane trees, cypresses and pines.

This is very common and affects your quality of life, as it disrupts your work or daily activities, or prevents you from going out for a walk, etc.

How is it diagnosed?

Mainly on the basis of the symptoms you are experiencing. An allergy assessment is usually supplemented by skin tests and blood tests.

How can I treat it?

- Firstly, try to avoid or reduce your exposure to the allergen.
- Next, rinse your nose with saline solution. This will remove any dust and pollen and significantly reduce your symptoms.
- If necessary, use cortisone-based eye drops or nasal sprays, or take



antihistamine tablets, as recommended by your doctor.

- And, in some cases, through immunotherapy.

How can I try to avoid contact with pollen?

Check pollen levels in Catalonia.
[Aerobiological Information Centre.](#)

On days when pollen levels are at their highest:

- Air your home briefly and keep the windows closed for the rest of the day.
- Do not dry your washing outside.
- Keep your car windows closed when travelling.
- Avoid riding a motorbike or cycling.
- Avoid spending too much time outdoors, especially at sunrise or sunset, or on dry, windy days.
- If pollen levels are high and you have to go out, you can wear a face mask and sunglasses.
- Avoid areas where there are plants that trigger your allergies.
- Do not mow the lawn or sweep the patio.

And at home, is there anything I can do?

- Avoid feather duvets and pillows.
- Dust with a damp cloth. It's better to vacuum than to sweep.
- Avoid items where dust accumulates, such as rugs, woollen blankets and soft toys.

And is there anything else I can do to prevent it?

- Drink enough water to keep your mucous membranes hydrated.
- Avoid other irritants, such as tobacco smoke.

And what should I do about pets?

If you suffer from allergies, you should avoid having pets in the house, whether they are dogs, cats or birds. If this isn't possible, avoid touching them and don't let them into the bedrooms.