



Columbia  
**Asthma & Allergy**  
CLINIC

## **Press Release**

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### **ALLERGY SUFFERERS DON'T NEED TO DREAD SPRING**

Sniffling, sneezing, wheezing, and itchy, watery eyes. For many, the arrival of spring is not heralded by warmer temperatures and flowering trees, but by the symptoms of allergy season.

How can allergy sufferers get over their symptoms and enjoy this beautiful time of year? Dr. Sanjeev Jain, who runs the acclaimed Columbia Asthma & Allergy Clinic in Camas, recommends a three pronged approach for those with seasonal allergies that can help alleviate their symptoms and stop their suffering.

Seasonal allergies are caused by harmless pollens, which our bodies immune system mistake as harmful, causing an allergic reaction. Pollen counts rise during the spring because trees pollinate at this time of year. Surprisingly, spring flowers don't cause allergies because their pollens are too heavy to become airborne.

Most individuals with seasonal allergies are allergic to more than one type of allergen but they only feel the symptoms when their exposure level has reached a certain point. During the spring, seasonal allergy symptoms appear because the increased exposure to outdoor allergens such as pollen combines with exposure to other allergens like dust mites and cat dander.

For that reason, the first step that Dr. Jain recommends for controlling spring allergies is to control exposure to allergens. The easiest way to accomplish that is by controlling the indoor environment. Environmental control will reduce the baseline exposure level for allergy sufferers, decreasing the frequency and intensity of symptoms. Simply shutting the windows can dramatically reduce exposure levels. Also, installing an air conditioning unit with an effective air filtration system can help keep the air free of particles that might cause allergies. It is also important to reduce the build-up of indoor allergens such as dust mites and cat dander by dust mite proofing mattresses and pillows and using a HEPA air-filtration unit.

If keeping the whole house free of allergens sounds too challenging, the next best option is to focus on the bedroom. Most people spend a third of their lives in their bedroom, so keeping the bedroom free of allergens can significantly reduce the level of exposure.

Another way to try to limit exposure is by avoiding outdoor activities when pollen levels are at their highest. Pollen levels are higher in the morning and on clear and windy days, but tend to be lower after heavy rains. However, day to day variations in individual symptoms may not reflect the overall pollen level that day. This is because many of the allergic symptoms represent the cumulative effect of many factors, and some of the allergic reactions lead to delayed symptoms.

The second step that Dr. Jain recommends for controlling spring allergies is medication. Newer antihistamines such as Claritin, Allegra, and Zyrtec are effective at controlling sneezing, itching, watery eyes, and runny nose. At night-time, older antihistamines such as Benadryl are also a good option because they are just as effective as newer antihistamines, even though they cause drowsiness. All antihistamines work better if they are used before allergic exposure. For seasonal allergies, it's best to take them approximately thirty minutes before going outdoors. Prescription nasal sprays such as Nasonex, Rhinocort, and Flonase are also quite effective at controlling most hay fever symptoms, and are better than antihistamines at controlling nasal congestion.

Finally, for those allergy sufferers whose symptoms are not reduced by either environmental control or medications, Dr. Jain recommends immunotherapy (allergy shots) as the third prong of an effective treatment strategy. In immunotherapy, the allergy sufferers receive injections of small quantities of allergen extracts under their skin so they develop long term tolerance to those allergens. Immunotherapy is also a good option for those who do not want to depend on allergy medications long term.

At his allergy clinic in Camas, Dr. Jain sees a spike in patients at this time of year. But by effectively managing allergies with a three pronged treatment strategy, most people can get over their symptoms and enjoy the season. Environmental control, medication, and immunotherapy are the three steps allergy sufferers can take to feeling better this spring.

**About Columbia Asthma & Allergy:** Columbia Asthma & Allergy Clinic was opened by Dr. Sanjeev Jain in 2005 in Camas, WA. His goal was to provide world class allergy and asthma care in the comfortable environment of a friendly community facility. Educated in allergy and immunology at Yale University, Dr. Jain first received a joint MD and PhD from the University of Wisconsin and finished his residency at the University of Texas. He then taught and practiced at the University of Washington Medical School in Seattle, where he developed a reputation as one of the finest allergists in the region. He has won numerous awards and was recently included in the Guide to America's Top Physicians. To find out more about the Columbia Asthma & Allergy Clinic visit [www.caac-md.com](http://www.caac-md.com).