

Understanding Fall Allergies

The flowers may no longer be blooming, but that doesn't spell relief for many allergy sufferers. Trees pollinate in the spring, grass pollinates in the summer, and then finally weeds pollinate late summer and into fall. One of the main contributors to fall allergies is the ragweed plant. About 75% of people who are allergic to spring pollen-producing plants are also allergic to ragweed. A single plant can produce one billion pollen grains per season, and ragweed pollen can travel hundreds of miles on the wind, so it can affect you even if it doesn't grow where you live. Outdoor molds are another main cause of fall allergies. They are common in soil, compost piles, and in the leaves that cover the ground. Mold spores are light, very small, and easily inhaled into the lungs.

Protecting Yourself

Here are some precautions you can take to help protect yourself against allergens:

- Use a face mask when you are outside, especially between 5 and 10 a.m. and on windy days.
- Remove pollen from your skin and hair by showering frequently.
- Keep your windows closed and turn on the air conditioner.
- Dry your clothes inside the dryer instead of hanging clothes outside.
- Have decaying leaves removed from your yard and gutters.
- If you rake leaves in the fall, wear a face mask.
- When you first turn on your car air conditioner, leave your windows open and avoid breathing the air for several minutes until mold spores can disperse.

Reference:
"The Most Common Fall Allergies," by Chris Iliades, MD <http://www.everydayhealth.com/year-round-allergies/most-common-fall-allergies.aspx>

October is National Physical Therapy Month

At Hawthorne Medical Equipment we carry an array of rehabilitation and therapy equipment to assist you. Visit our website <http://www.hawthornesc.com/medical>, or feel free to stop by or give us a call!

Breast Cancer

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is an opportunity to promote screening and early detection of breast cancer.

Roughly 1 in 8 women in the United States will get breast cancer. Next to skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common kind of cancer in women.

Symptoms of breast cancer may include:

- A lump, hard knot or thickening inside the breast or underarm area
- A change in size or shape of the breast
- Swelling, warmth, redness, or darkening of the breast
- Fluid (called "discharge") from a nipple
- Itchy, scaly sore or rash on nipple
- Pulling in of nipple or other parts of your breast
- New pain in one spot that doesn't go away
- Dimpling or puckering of skin

You have a better chance of surviving breast cancer if it's found early. Talk to your family to learn about your family health history. Talk to a doctor about your personal risk for breast cancer, especially if breast or ovarian cancer runs in your family. Your doctor can help you decide when and how often to get a mammogram. Also, make healthy lifestyle choices to decrease your risk such as maintaining a healthy weight, adding exercise into your routine, limiting alcohol intake, and breastfeeding if able. Visit the Susan G. Komen website <http://www5.komen.org/BreastCancer/LowerYourRisk.html> for helpful guides on assessing your risk and questions to ask your doctor.