### How to corral spring allergies

**By EXPONENT**

Each spring, flowers begin to bloom, grass starts to grow and people from all walks of life rekindle their love affair with the great outdoors. Spring also marks the return of a familiar foe: allergies.

Seasonal allergies can put a damper on even the most welcoming spring day. As a result, a day spent outside can be less enjoyable—and may cause health issues for allergy sufferers. To have their spring and enjoy it, too, try these strategies:

- **Pay attention to seasonal allergy triggers.** Seasonal allergies are easier to track than ever. Pollen.org is an easily accessible and free site that allows visitors to type in their ZIP codes and area's pollen levels, Jergens® offers maps for their towns and cities. Visitors also can use five-day forecasts that can help them plan trips and other outdoor excursions. Weather.com also offers daily allergy reports for their visitors to type in their ZIP codes and get updates.

- **Stay indoors when allergen levels are especially high.** The Mayo Clinic notes individuals can make use of these sites and plan their activities based on the information they provide.

- **Maintain clean air indoors.** The great outdoors is not the only place where allergens proliferate. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America notes that improving air quality in a home can reduce allergy triggers. Air conditioners can prevent outdoor allergens from entering a home, so use units on warm spring days when you might otherwise open the windows. Open windows and screen doors provide easy entry points for allergens like pollen, so turning on the air conditioner when outdoor allergen counts are high can make seasonal allergies more manageable.

- **Consider treatments.** Over-the-counter treatments like antihistamines, nasal sprays and decongestants provide individuals with sufficient relief from their seasonal allergies. If OTC remedies are ineffective, treatment options like subcutaneous immunotherapy and a consultation with an allergist may be necessary. Nasal irrigation with a saline solution may also be a remedy, and it can be done easily at home any time. Talk to your health care provider before starting any over-the-counter medicines or allergy treatments, as these might interact or react with other medications.