General Information on Pollen, Allergies and Asthma:

Pollen counts tend to be highest early in the morning on warm, dry, breezy days and lowest during chilly, wet times. The good news is Pollen allergies are seasonal which means you will only experience symptoms when those particles are in the air. When suffering from allergic rhinitis/pollen allergies, the body’s natural defense attempts to ‘fight off’ the pollen, in turn causing all of the miserable symptoms many know too well - runny nose, congestion, scratchy throat, and watery eyes. You can check pollen counts daily through your local news stations and/or sign-up to receive daily pollen count information (See information below).

Allowing students to stay indoors when the pollen count is high and/or as indicated by medical experts is an important preventive measure for schools.

Additionally, most allergy sufferers can get relief from allergy symptoms by making the following changes in and around their home and while at school:

- Keep the windows closed and run the air conditioner during allergy season – in your car and house/school
- Stay indoors when pollen counts are high – avoid outdoor activities until early evening. Pollen counts tend to be highest in the morning.
- Use an air purifier with a HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filter in your home and make sure to change or clear air filters regularly
- Change your clothes and wash your hands after coming from outside on a high-pollen day
- Shower before going to bed or when you get home. Pollen can settle into your hair and onto your skin and clothes.
- Clean and dust your home regularly and use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter
- If you have outdoor plans, take your allergy medication before going out. Don’t wait until you have symptoms.

Please note some common mistakes in treating Spring allergies include treating symptoms without knowing their specific cause, treating after the symptoms start and spending money on over-the-counter medications with no relief and not seeing a medical provider and not avoiding triggers.

Seasonal allergies may also trigger asthma and can mimic the common cold. In fact, there are common threads between seasonal allergies and asthma. The symptoms that are produced by allergies can be the same symptoms that are produced by asthma, and asthma can be triggered by pollen. Although there is no real cure for seasonal allergies, it is possible to reduce a child’s symptoms. The best way to do this is to avoid exposure to allergens whenever possible. The following are some additional tips to share with parents of students who have seasonal allergies (especially if they also have asthma):

- See your Healthcare Provider - your doctor may also suggest medications (or additional medications) to control your child’s symptoms. Take prescribed and/or over-the-counter medications as indicated.
- If you suspect your child suffers from seasonal allergies, request allergy testing to help identify their specific allergies. See a healthcare provider.
- If your child is allergic to pollen, keep all car and house windows closed and use the air conditioning during pollen season to prevent triggering an asthma attack.
- Be aware of the pollen count for your child’s allergies and take precautions if the counts are high. If your child also has asthma, he/she may need pretreatment before playing outside on high-
pollen days. Pollen counts can be found on several of the local news station websites and/or on
the following websites: https://www.pollen.com/map/ga or http://www.atlantaallergy.com/

The following is the link to CHOA’s website on allergies: https://www.choa.org/medical-services/allergy-
and-immunology and parents can click on the following website to read more information about seasonal
allergies and other asthma: https://www.choa.org/medical-services/asthma/related-asthma

As mentioned earlier, there are several sources that you can use to check the pollen count
and air quality. The following are two of the most common websites to check the pollen
count and air quality: http://www.atlantaallergy.com/pollen_counts or
https://airgeorgia.org/AtlantaForecast.html

You can also receive automatic updates on Smog Alert information by signing-up on the Mothers &
Others for Clean Air website at: http://www.mothersandothersforecleanair.org/
or http://gacommuteoptions.com/Be-the-Solution/Smog-Alerts

We hope this information is helpful but it is not intended to be a substitute for consultation with a
healthcare provider.