

JIFNEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter from the Somerset County Joint Insurance Fund
featuring Safety, Health & Wellness



What Bug Bit Me?



ANSWERS FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: MOSQUITO, TICK, BED BUG, SPIDER

Allergies & Hay Fever

Hopefully now that winter is behind us, we must turn our attention to seasonal allergies. Allergies are the 6th leading cause of chronic illness in the U.S. with an annual cost in excess of \$18 billion. More than 50 million Americans suffer from allergies each year.

Allergies are an overreaction of the immune system to substances that generally do not affect other individuals. These substances, or allergens, can cause sneezing, coughing, and itching. Allergic reactions range from merely bothersome to life-threatening. Some allergies are seasonal, like hay fever. Allergies have also been associated with chronic conditions like sinusitis and asthma.

Anyone may have or develop an allergy – from a baby born with an allergy to cow's milk, to a child who gets poison ivy, to a senior citizen who develops hives after taking a new medication.

"Hay fever" is a misnomer. Hay is not a usual cause of this problem, and it does not cause

fever. Early descriptions of sneezing, nasal congestion, and eye irritation while harvesting field hay promoted this popular term. Allergic rhinitis is the correct term used to describe this allergic reaction, and many different substances cause the allergic symptoms noted in hay fever.

Allergies can generally not be prevented but allergic reactions can be. Once a person knows they are allergic to a certain substance, they can avoid contact with the allergen. Strategies for doing this include being in an air-conditioned environment during peak hay-fever season, avoiding certain foods, and eliminating dust mites and animal dander from the home. They can also control the allergy by reducing or eliminating the symptoms. Strategies include taking medication to counteract reactions or minimize symptoms and being immunized with allergy injection therapy.

SOURCE: CDC GATEWAY TO HEALTH COMMUNICATION

Top 10 Spring CLEANING

TIPS



1 Do not rush because you are tired or in a hurry.

This is really the most basic spring cleaning safety tip, and all the other ones, at least to a certain degree, stem from this one. Spring cleaning can be tiring work. Do not forget safety even if you have worked hard all day and want to get done. The better thing to do when you are exhausted is to stop and take a break, drink a glass of water, sit under a nice cool fan, and rest instead of being unsafe.

2 Be careful moving large pieces of furniture and appliances.

Use proper lifting technique, keeping your back straight and lifting with your legs. Also, wear shoes when moving heavy items so you don't hurt your toes. Finally, if you feel it is just too heavy and you can't find someone else to do it for you, just don't move it. It won't be the end of the world to just clean around it. Always have spring cleaning safety in mind.

3 Be safe while on ladders and step stools.

When doing a task, such as washing windows, where you need to be on a ladder use extreme caution. Do not lean too far to either side. A good rule of thumb is that your belly button should not go beyond the sides of the ladder. Also, have someone available to hold the ladder steady for you if possible, and make sure before you step on them that the rungs are not wet, and you are wearing nonskid shoes.

4 Be careful when walking on wet surfaces.

This spring cleaning safety tip is really important every time you clean. Everyone knows how easy it is to slip on a wet floor. Make sure you take the proper precautions to keep from falling. Also, make sure others in your family, including children, are also warned of the wet floor to keep them safe. You may need to block small children's access to wet floors because they just don't understand not to run and slide on them.

5 Keep stairs, landings, and walkways clear of boxes, bags and other clutter.

Spring cleaning is a great time to declutter your home, but you need to make sure all the boxes and bags of stuff you are getting rid of don't cause a safety concern. Make sure you place them outside walkways and especially away from steps and stairs where someone may trip on them.

6 Don't carry too much stuff at once, especially on stairs.

During spring cleaning you will also probably go up and down your stairs a lot carrying things if you live in a home with stairs. Make sure you keep a hand free to hold onto the stair railing. Also, whether you have stairs or not, always make sure you can see over the load you are carrying so you do not trip.

7 Always follow cleaning product label safety instructions and recommendations.

Cleaning supplies can create nasty fumes, so make sure you get some fresh air by opening windows, turning on the exhaust fan, or placing a fan in the room. In addition, do not mix ammonia and bleach together, both of which are common household cleaners, because they create toxic fumes when combined. When it doubt don't mix, just use one product to get the job done. You should also wear rubber gloves to keep your hands from getting dry and cracked from the hot water and chemicals.

8 Wear a mask when cleaning dusty areas.

This may seem like overkill to some, but if you are at all allergic to dust this tip is very important.

9 Do not leave buckets filled with water around your home.

Even if you need to take a quick break make sure you empty that cleaning bucket, or at least put it in an inaccessible area. Even small amounts of water are a drowning hazard for small children.

10 Put away all your cleaning supplies when you are done.

When you finally finish your spring cleaning tasks for the day it is easy to say to yourself, "I'll put these away later," or "I am just going to use these again tomorrow, so I'm keeping them out." Cleaning supplies are an attractive nuisance for our children and pets, something inviting that they should definitely not be getting into. Put the cleaning products away in a childproof cabinet for your children's safety and well-being as soon as you are done with them.

SOURCE: HOUSEHOLD-MANAGEMENT- 101.COM

Spring Cleaning Puzzle

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