

Gesundheit! Here's how to keep the sneezes to a minimum as pollen counts rise

Atrium Health Floyd providers encourage early prevention and symptom control as allergy season begins

ROME, GA., March 3, 2026 – As plants begin a new season of growth and bloom, health care providers at Atrium Health Floyd are reminding residents that rising tree pollen levels can trigger seasonal allergy symptoms and are offering practical tips to help people feel their best this season.

Seasonal allergic rhinitis — often called hay fever — is commonly caused by pollen from trees as spring approaches. Symptoms may include sneezing, nasal congestion, a runny nose, itchy nose or throat, and itchy or watery eyes. These can often worsen on dry, windy days when pollen levels are higher.

“Many people think of allergies as a minor nuisance, but symptoms can significantly affect sleep, work, and quality of life if they aren’t managed early,” said Jacob Collier, M.D., Atrium Health Floyd primary care physician. “The good news is there are simple steps people can take to reduce exposure and control symptoms.”

Tips to reduce pollen exposure include:

- Check daily pollen counts and limit outdoor activities when levels are high
- Keep windows closed at home and in the car during peak pollen times
- Wear sunglasses or eyeglasses outdoors to reduce pollen exposure to the eyes
- Change clothes and shower after spending time outside to remove pollen from skin and hair
- Use air conditioning and change HVAC filters regularly to help keep indoor air cleaner

Over-the-counter medications such as oral antihistamines and corticosteroid nasal sprays can help relieve allergy symptoms, Collier said.

“Corticosteroid sprays are a first-line treatment for moderate or persistent symptoms, but it’s important to use them consistently,” Collier said. “Saline nasal rinses can also help flush pollen from the nasal passages, and allergy eye drops may provide relief for itchy or watery eyes.”

Patients are encouraged to talk with a health care provider before starting a new over-the-counter allergy medication—especially if they take prescription medications or have other health conditions, he said.

“Contact your primary care provider if allergy symptoms worsen, interfere with sleep or daily activities, or if you experience shortness of breath or wheezing,” he said, adding that video visits virtual care options are available for convenient, easy-to-access care.

About Atrium Health Floyd

The [Atrium Health Floyd](#) family of health care services is a leading medical provider and economic force in northwest Georgia and northeast Alabama. Atrium Health Floyd is part of Charlotte, North Carolina based [Advocate Health](#), the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States. Atrium Health Floyd strategically combined with Harbin Clinic in 2024 and employs more than 5,200 teammates who provide care in over 40 medical specialties at four facilities: Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center, a 361-bed full-service, acute care hospital and regional referral center in Rome, Georgia; Atrium Health Floyd Polk Medical Center in Cedartown, Georgia; Atrium Health Floyd Cherokee Medical Center in Centre, Alabama; and Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center Behavioral Health, also in Rome. Committed to redefining care for all, Atrium Health Floyd and Harbin Clinic provide primary care, specialty care and urgent care throughout northwest Georgia and northeast Alabama. Atrium Health Floyd also operates a stand-alone emergency department in Chattooga County, the first such facility to be built from the ground-up in Georgia.

About Atrium Health

[Atrium Health](#) is a nationally recognized leader in shaping health outcomes through innovative research, education and compassionate patient care. Based in Charlotte, North Carolina, Atrium Health is part of [Advocate Health](#), the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States. A recognized leader in experiential medical education and groundbreaking research, [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) is the health system's academic core. Atrium Health is renowned for its top-ranked pediatric, cancer and heart care, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Atrium Health is also a leading-edge innovator in virtual care and mobile medicine, providing care close to home and in the home. It is ranked nationally among U.S. News & World Report's Best Hospitals in eight pediatric specialties and for rehabilitation. With a commitment to redefine care for every community it serves, Atrium Health provides nearly \$3 billion in free and uncompensated care and other community benefits.

About Advocate Health

[Advocate Health](#) is the third-largest nonprofit, integrated health system in the United States, created from the combination of Advocate Aurora Health and Atrium Health. Providing care under the names [Advocate Health Care](#) in Illinois; [Atrium Health](#) in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama; and [Aurora Health Care](#) in Wisconsin, Advocate Health is a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, Advocate Health services nearly 6 million patients and is engaged in hundreds of clinical trials and research studies, with [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) serving as the academic core of the enterprise. Advocate Health is nationally recognized for its expertise in heart and vascular, neurosciences, oncology, pediatrics and rehabilitation, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Advocate Health employs more than 160,000 teammates across 69 hospitals and over 1,000 care locations, and offers one of the nation's largest graduate medical education programs with over 2,000 residents and fellows across more than 200 programs. Committed to redefining care for all, Advocate Health provides more than \$6 billion in annual community benefits.

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