

For Further Information, Contact:
Amanda Soelle, WOA Director of Communications
Email: amanda@woa-eyes.org
Phone: 608.824.2200

SEASONAL EYE ALLERGIES CAN MAKE FOR AN ITCHY SPRING SEASON

Members of the Wisconsin Optometric Association recommend seeing your eye doctor to treat allergic conjunctivitis.

MADISON, WI – The beginning of spring is often welcomed with thoughts of warmer weather, blooming flowers, and an escape from the Wisconsin winter cold. However, for the millions of Americans who suffer from seasonal eye allergies, the early signs of springtime can also mean sneezing, coughing, and itchy, watery eyes. The good news is that a simple visit to your eye doctor can help soothe these symptoms.

Many people experience “allergic conjunctivitis” during the spring season—an inflammation of the tissue lining the eyelids (conjunctiva) caused by allergens such as pollen, mold, dust mites, and pet dander. The American Optometric Association’s (AOA) American Eye-Q® survey found that nearly 40% of Americans suffer from seasonal eye allergies. Common symptoms include itchy, watery eyes, redness, irritation, and dryness.

While antihistamines may help relieve symptoms like runny noses and sneezing, they can sometimes worsen eye-related symptoms. So how can patients find relief? According to 2026 WOA President and New Berlin optometrist Dr. Ryan Deibert, “To effectively treat and relieve the symptoms caused by eye allergies, patients should see their eye doctor. In many cases, we can manage allergy-related conjunctivitis with prescription or over-the-counter eye drops, depending on the patient and their medical history.”

Although seasonal eye allergies can affect anyone, spring can be especially challenging for contact lens wearers. Extended wear time is a key factor, and studies show that more than half of contact lens wearers exceed recommended replacement schedules. Dr. Deibert recommends the following tips to help reduce discomfort:

- Reduce contact lens wear time when possible.
- Replace your contact lens case every 1–3 months.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before handling lenses.
- Clean lenses daily with a multi-purpose solution.
- Soak lenses overnight in fresh solution.
- Store lenses in a proper case.
- Clean and air dry the case after each use.

In addition to proper contact lens care, symptoms can be reduced by avoiding eye rubbing, washing bedding regularly in hot water, limiting the use of eye makeup during flare-ups, and never sharing contact lenses or cases.

To find a licensed doctor of optometry, visit www.woa-eyes.org.

About the Wisconsin Optometric Association

The Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA) is a nonprofit affiliation of licensed doctors of optometry and associated businesses dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the vision welfare of the people of Wisconsin. The WOA accomplishes its goals through: education and dissemination of information, organized governmental activity, legislation and regulation, mediation with consumer and public interest groups, and provision of collective benefits to its members. Approximately 640 doctors of optometry are currently members of the WOA, located in nearly every county in the state. All members must be licensed to practice optometry by the State of Wisconsin. For more information, visit WOA’s website at www.woa-eyes.org.