Seasonal Allergies

Introduction

Grace
Welcome to "What's up!: Wellness from the third floor". This podcast is provided by the Wellness & Health Action Team, also known as WHAT, from Portland State University's Center for Student Health and Counseling, or SHAC. We're located in suite 340 on the third floor of the University Center Building on campus. Our purpose with this podcast is to discuss a variety of health related topics in a way that will be accessible for our non traditional campus. My name is Grace and my pronouns are she/her .

Julie
And my name is Julie and my pronouns are she/her. We're all members of the Wellness & Health Action Team and we'll be the hosts of this podcast. Let's get into it!

Soothing jazz music fades out

SPEAKERS
Julie, Grace

Julie 00:01
Hi, good morning grace. How are you doing today?

Grace 00:04
I'm good Julie, how are you?

Julie 00:05
I'm doing great as well. Um, so for today's episode, before we get into the content, just a quick disclaimer, we're going to be talking briefly about the event that happened regarding gun violence. So if you do not want to listen to it, feel free to go down to our description and click into the timestamp that will take you directly to today's content. But um, Grace, do you want to get us started?

Grace 00:32
Yeah, we just wanted to do a quick. I don't really know the word- quick memoriam acknowledgement about the shooting that happened on April 4. We just wanted to give our sympathy and just kind of talk about Amara Marluke, and send our love to everybody in the community who has been affected by this. It's a very, very tragic event to happen on campus. And Amara's family, we're sending you love and encouragement and our greatest sympathy. And yeah, I think I think this is just such a tragic thing to have happened. And I mean, I'm kind of having a hard time with it. So yeah, I'm just I feel very heartbroken over it.

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Julie 01:23
Yeah and for it to be very close to home. Yeah, it can greatly affect us, as students and as members. Being a part of the PSU community, it means a lot. And yeah, and so we just wanted to quickly acknowledge that. And regarding students, employees, and everyone that is a part of the Portland State community, we want you to know that there are resources that you can use. In times like this, and includes the Center for Student Health and Counseling. We they offer mental health services for students and everyone, and then the POC employee Assistant Program, along with the Women's Resource Center, the cultural resource centers and the employee affinity and resource groups. There are also other resources available for students on the Student Life website, which we will link in the description as well. Yeah, so yeah, we just want to put that out there. And now we're going to get into today's content, which we will be talking about spring allergies, which is something that we all have us or most of us I do severely every year.

Grace 02:36
I had my first allergy attack when I was in elementary school, and I had to go home that I just remember so distinctly because I I literally thought I was like dying. Like I think I was probably like in fourth grade or something. I just remember being really little and like sitting in the office and be like "Mom, come pick me up, but I was like, I don't know what's going on." But yeah, spring allergies are definitely- it's weird like in Portland like I'm from the Rogue Valley and it's a lot more dry. I guess. More dry than Portland at least so my allergies were a lot worse when I was living at home but they definitely are prevalent in Portland especially like when you walk in the Park Blocks like I cannot like there's- ugh no, my dog and I are struggling right now.

Julie 03:28
No yeah, I never had allergies when I was in California because there's no trees in California where I lived

Grace 03:34
Wow it sounds so beautiful.

Julie 03:36
And so I didn't develop it till I think a couple year or just like two years ago. Yeah, it's when you move. Yeah, so I'm still trying to get used to it.

Grace 03:46
You're a litte baby allergy sufferer, I'm a veteran.

Julie 03:49
Um, but yeah, so first we're going to talk about what are seasonal allergies. So what are the symptoms, causes and treatment so seasonal allergies, are also known as allergic rhinitis, or hay fever, so it occurs when your immune system over reacts to an outdoor allergens such as pollen, it can be identified as an airborne substance that's usually harmless, and isn't as dangerous. It responds to of course, our immune system response to those substances and allergens and when it does, it releases

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this histamines and other chemicals into your bloodstream. So this chemicals produces symptoms such as allergic reaction.

Grace 04:34
Sounds awful- just like when it sounds sciency it just sounds so much scarier than just like my eyes are itchy.

Julie 04:41
Than just seasonal allergies. Yeah, um, but yeah, so these allergies, of course, triggers your allergic reaction. And, of course, pollen comes from pollinated plants, such as trees, grasses, and weeds, which are very prevalent during the spring, summer time. That's their heyday. There. Prime Time and that's when they're out there. So if you're having allergy symptoms can include sneezing, having runny slash stuffy nose, water, your itchy eyes, itchy sinuses, your throat may also be itchy, your or your ear canal. You can also experience Ear congestion and post nasal drainage. Those are more of like a common symptoms, whereas some of the less common symptoms include headache, shortness of breath, wheezing, or coughing, which makes us a bit of something else, which we'll we'll get to, but those are more of like the rare symptoms that normally aren't really associated with seasonal allergies, but they may appear. Um, so speaking of seasonal allergy, because we live in Portland and some of the things you just want to throw in is that, of course, Portland's a little more unique. And some things that we found while we were researching about seasonal allergies is that once they begin to become a little drier in Portland, you can expect the pollen count in the Willamette Valley to increase and the wind kind of like blow the tours Portland the metro area. And the tree pollen is soaring, especially folks who are allergic to more of like the types called juniper. Yeah, Yeah, juniper trees and alder trees Yeah, those are literally the Yeah, apparently according to research, those are the worst in Portland during the springtime. And then the season begins with like, of course tree pollen and grass and ragweed pollen. Yeah, if you know you're allergic to one of those or you're allergic reactions are more severe when you're around that. That means that your allergies are about to get worse. Yeah, around this time of the year.

Grace 06:47
I so I lived in like Marion County, two years ago when we were doing quarantine like, first bit of quarantine. And it was so bad Julie like my allergies are bad, but Marion County is like the highest concentration of pollen count, in I think the Pacific Northwest or like the West Coast, like I remember my boyfriend's mom telling me about this and it was like insane. Like, I think it's like a really, I mean this is anecdotal I forgot to get stats on this but I think Marion County, which is like the Salem Keizer area is like the highest concentration of pollen in at least Oregon. So that kind of transfers over into Multnomah County a little bit, but I mean, it's a lot more wet in Portland, but it's tough out here, people it's tough out here in the Pacific Northwest.

Julie 07:40
It really is. And I didn't even to be honest, I didn't even know you know, yeah, not gonna lie. I used to make fun of my cousins who lived here when they had seasonal allergies

Grace 07:48

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That's called karma Julie, that's called karma!

Julie 07:51
I'm just like boohoo you got allergies. I don't. Fast forward. Now. Where am I here? Sneezing every time I'm outdoor during the spring

Grace 08:00
No, seriously catch me and Julie on campus, just like rubbing our eyes. So bad. But yeah, I think, um, we're also going to talk about a little bit in this episode a little later on about knowing the differences between COVID and seasonal allergies as well, because I mean, COVID has been impacting us for about three years now. Two years? three years? So I feel like it's been a year I think it's like two now. It feels in conclusion, it feels like an eternity. Um, but I know, I definitely freak out, like find trying to decipher between allergies and COVID. So we're going to talk about that as well. But we're also going to talk about managing seasonal allergies. And Julie is gonna give us a little bit of tips and tricks

Julie 08:50
Yes, definitely. So how to manage seasonal allergies, if you're a native and if you are, like, if you're like Grace, who has experienced allergies since the dawn of time, then you probably may know some of these tips. But just a reminder, you know, it's just to stay indoors on dry windy days. Some of the best time to go out is went after a good rain because of course a wash all pollens in the air is more clear.

Grace 09:16
It smells so good too, like spring rain. Oh, I know everybody likes that smell but like, it's just so good.

Julie 09:24
It's very refreshing. Um, so delegate lawn mowing is also another one like weed pulling or any garden chores that can induce allergies, kind of just reduce that and not do it as often. So also remove clothes that you have worn outside and possibly shower and come home to remove pollen or traps that are trapped in your skin or hair

Grace 09:46
That's intense! That's like intense allergies. That's if any of our listeners are having to do that. I'm so sorry. Like, that is a lot.

Julie 09:56
No, that's a lot. It's so bad. Another is keep your indoor air clean and you can do that by using air conditioners so you won't have to open your windows to get in fresh air so they'll prevent any opponents being in your environment. Also using air filters or dehumidifier is also very good. So anything that basically helps like filter the air in your proximity your areas really beneficial. You can also rinse your sinuses using a squeeze bottle or needle pot with distilled water. Have you ever used that?

Grace 10:30
A neti pot? Needy, neti? I think it's neti. I don't really know it. Um, I have not. But I when I was little when I used to have really bad allergies, I used to have to get hooked up to like a humidifier like a

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dehumidifier and my mom would like put it on me and it was like this big machine and I would have to like breathe in the clean air. It was It was intense but neti pot is it just sounds so uncomfortable. Like do you like you? You literally have to like pour water into your brain. Like that's not necessarily true, but it feels like it like I don't like it.

Julie 11:05
I was gonna say "wait really?!"

Grace 11:08
No you know what I mean it's like, I mean, I don't know. You're You're the one who takes anatomy classes, Julie. You probably know but you can't pour water into your brain... right?

Julie 11:18
It is really effective though for clearing your sinuses.

Grace 11:21
Yes.

Julie 11:23
I'll try on days where my allergies are like super bad.

Grace 11:26
Have you done a neti pot before?

Julie 11:28
No, I have not no

Grace 11:31
Next time you're you having an allergy attack, send a video of you doing a neti pot to me. I want to see I'll walk you through the steps.

Julie 11:40
I will definitely do. Um, so medical wise you can also try some over the counter remedies such as oral anti histamines such as Claritin, Zyertec allergies or Allegra allergy that they can reduce your symptoms and kind of relieve those.

Grace 12:04
Make sure that you're getting non drowsy ones though. If it's during the day. I have accidentally taken a Benadryl in the morning and it literally ruined my day.

Julie 12:13
I've never taken a Benadryl I've always ever taken Claritin

Grace 12:17

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You're a Claritin baddie

Julie 12:18
Girl I'm woke! I'm not trying to be drowsy! I didn't even know that there were drowsy and non-drowsy

Grace 12:31
Yeah, um, well, Benadryl is like an anti histamine. I don't remember the exact like generic scientific term but Benadryl is definitely induces drowsiness so good for nighttime. Yeah, but not for daytime

Julie 12:48
Not so much for daytime. Yeah. Yeah, so they're like decongestants or nasal sprays. I've never used nasal sprays. But I heard they work just as well

Grace 12:58
Basically just a glorified neti pot. I've used a nasal spray before. They're kind of epic, I like 'em.

Julie 13:04
I should check those out, too. Um, yeah. So and then just like, quickly, just a side note is that it could be fun to plug. So we have acupuncture services at SHAC. And we know people, students, and people who come through and they have tried it out, and it has helped manage their allergies. So that is something that you can do!

Grace 13:25
What can't acupuncture do, Julie? It just it seems to solve everything.

Julie 13:29
I feel like so I want to try acupuncture.

Grace 13:32
Good thing that we have acupuncture services at SHAC

Julie 13:35
Right here at Portland State that you can access whenever you want. So you can check those that option out. And if your allergies get worse, just see a provider, you know, for further guidance. So those are all like the tips you can use. But we know that sometimes, especially for people who've never experienced allergy before. It can be like, I don't know, shocking. Yeah, it is. So if you get like, oh no more concerned about it. Or if you see like worsening symptoms, and definitely it goes to your provider to get that checked out.

Grace 14:08
Yeah, and neither Julie or I are medical professionals at all. We're just giving you tips and stuff. I mean, I feel like allergies are pretty common. So everybody has their own remedies for it. But it can be jarring to move somewhere where you away from somewhere where you weren't having allergies, and then all of a sudden you are having allergies. So yeah, and then now we're gonna get into talking about the

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difference between COVID allergies and cold. I know that cold season is kind of over now. But it can be really hard to differentiate between all three of these, so we're going to just kind of get into it. So COVID and the common cold have a lot of similarities. They're both caused by viruses and COVID is caused by the SARS COVID-2- how would you say that? Sorry, sorry,

Julie 15:02
COVID-2

Grace 15:04
Like at Julie! Pre med I'm like, I don't know anything. Um, while a common cold is often caused by rhinoviruses, which is similar to the common or to allergies, which are caused by rhinitis, allergic rhinitis, and then like the rhino virus, which means like, Rhino virus rhinitis is like your nose. Anyways, that was just a connection I wanted to make. But yeah, so the virus has spread in similar ways and can cause similar symptoms, the COVID-19 in common cold, but there are a few differences, mainly that COVID can cause GI distress, whereas the common cold, literally never does. And a loss of sense of smell or taste with a common cold that can be because of a stuffy nose, whereas the sense of smell can be lost with COVID due to neurological damage. So you can not have a stuffy nose or anything, and it can be COVID related, whereas with the common cold, I mean, I've lost my sense of smell with the common cold because it's having a stuffy nose.

Julie 16:10
Yeah, I have too, and it's just like your appetite just decrease Yeah, like less than appetite when you're sick. And that goes with sense of smell as well.

Grace 16:18
Yeah. And then cold symptoms show up, usually one to three days after exposure, whereas COVID symptoms show up anywhere between 2 to 14 days. So they are like, very similar, but there are very distinct differences. Especially because COVID, again, like the loss of sense of smell is due to neurological damage and their COVID can also be associated with GI distress, like gastrointestinal distress, whereas the common cold is much more like in your nasal area, your chest area. So, yeah, that's just a little overview. I feel like it's a little late to be talking about that. But yeah, and then the differentiating differentiating between COVID and seasonal allergies is a little easier. And I think, especially because people who are used to regular spring allergies know themselves pretty well when it comes to that I know myself well enough to be able to differentiate between my allergies or a sickness because I get allergies every year for weeks at a time. So I kind of know what it is and what it looks like for me. So, again, unlike COVID-19 seasonal allergies aren't caused by a virus and seasonal allergies, like Julie said, are caused by immune response system or immune system responses triggered by exposure to allergens such as a juniper tree, or grass, pollens, and COVID can cause fever and muscle aches, which is not likely to happen with allergies. And again, allergies do not typically cause GI distress the way that COVID does. And we're talking spring allergies, not like just allergic reactions

Julie 18:06
Yeah. Specifically seasonal ones.

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Grace 18:10
Yeah. So it can be hard to differentiate between them. But when we were doing research between for between this all it was pretty easy to find charts online, differentiating between I mean, I remember spring 2020 when there wasn't as much knowledge about COVID. And I literally I was going I was just going down rabbit hole after rabbit hole being like, "Oh my God, my, my sore throat like my ears are a little bit itchy like it's COVID." But now, we've been in the thick of this for a while. So there's a lot more resources to differentiate between it. And also the SHAC has COVID testing services as well. So if you really think that you're having COVID Instead of allergies, there's no harm in getting tested. So yeah.

Julie 18:58
And I mean, to be honest, this is from personal experiences, but I feel like the past two like year or so because we've been wearing our mask. I feel like in some way somehow my symptoms aren't as bad as

Grace 19:13
Yeah, because you're not breathing them in!

Julie 19:15
Yeah, I'm not breathing them like directly breathing in the air and so the mask helps

Grace 19:20
I haven't gotten a cold in a while either.

Julie 19:23
Yeah, no!

Grace 19:24
Masks work y'all...

Julie 19:26
In a way the mask has helped um, regarding like seasonal allergies because I'm not breathing in the pollen and so my symptoms aren't worse. It's not like I don't because every morning I wake up my nose is just fussy and I'm just I hate it here

Grace 19:40
Got to do that neti pot.

Julie 19:44
I do. But yes, like we said allergies can occur anytime of the year I have really bad winter allergies. Because I remember you talking about that. Yeah, and so I don't know how spring is gonna look like for me cuz I'm still new to this. Still new to Portland allergies. And so um, yeah, but yeah, I'll even have in any time of the year, it may be worse during a certain season for certain individuals. But spring allergies are the most common form of allergy. So we just wanted to kind of run it through and let y'all know. So

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especially those who are new to it wouldn't be worried that they might come by might have COVID or might have caught a cold. But yeah, we just want to run those through, give some tips on it.

Grace 20:30
Yeah. And there's also like, I think with allergies, too, you can get congested a lot. And I mean, you could do a neti pot too. But there's also like herbal teas as well. Like you can do peppermint tea, or green tea, lemon tea.

Julie 20:47
I heard pepper tea, ginger, peppermint tea is really good

Grace 20:50
Peppermint tea literally fixes everything. She's amazing. Um, but yeah, there's lots of solutions for clearing out your sinuses related to seasonal allergies. And also seasonal allergies, just straight up suck. Like, yeah, they make you feel gross and drowsy. And I mean, at least for me, personally, I just kind of get stuck in a slump. It just was so uncomfortable. It I hate it. So I'm sorry if you are experiencing spring allergies. I'm there with you. And Julie is too. She will bring her neti pot. I love it.

Julie 21:31
That's so funny. But yeah. Is there anything else? You want to add grace to this?

Grace 21:35
Um, no. I mean, like I said, my heart goes out to you if you were struggling with seasonal allergies, especially if you're experiencing them for the first time that it's always an unpleasant experience. So finding what works best for you is the best way to go about it.

Julie 21:56
Yeah, for sure. It takes time to figure it out, too, especially if you're new to it. But after you're getting used to it, it becomes like a routine every year when it comes around. But yeah, doing what helps relieve those symptoms and make you feel butters really good. Always you can always use our tips. Yeah, he wants to try something new. But yes, all about managing it and it'll go away. It'll just go away. Yeah, I have to be patient and put up with I don't know. It sucks.

Grace 22:26
Yeah. Putting up with that as part of the challenge of spring term. But no, yeah, yeah. How is your spring term going? It week two right now y'all.

Julie 22:35
It's it's going good. It's spring term right now. Yes. It's going good. What about you grace?

Grace 22:40
It's it's going. It's going well... Yeah. Yeah, I don't sound super convincing. But I mean, nothing could be worse than my winter term.

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Julie 22:51
Winter terms are the worst!

Grace 22:52
So what is up with that people? Anyways, I hope that y'all are having a excellent second week of classes. And when this gets published, I guess we'll be going into week three, but

Julie 23:05
or if you can hear this any time have fun.

Grace 23:08
If you're listening in the future, like, how's it going? But yeah, hope you all are doing well and do Yeah. Take care of yourself. Take care of your allergies. do prioritize yourself. Self Care. Do it. Let's go.

Julie 23:28
Thank you, Grace for you.

Grace 23:29
Thanks, Julie.

Julie 23:30
All right. Bye. Great. Bye.

Soothing jazz music fades out

Outro

Julie

We hope you enjoyed this week's episode of the WHAT's Up Podcast! We'll catch up with you next week. We at SHAC are fully committed to the physical and emotional health and wellness of PSU students. Please call ahead to use our health services for flu shots, free COVID testing, or general appointments at (503) 725-2800. Counseling services are still available via telehealth, and you can schedule your appointments by calling that same number at (503) 725-2800. If you're looking for more health and wellness resources, you can check out our online health magazine that gets sent to your pbx.edu email every Wednesday, or you can download the Campus Well app. Also feel free to check out the Virtual Mind Spa Experience to rest, relax, and rejuvenate wherever you have internet access. We will be including resource links in the episode description, as well as the link to the episode transcript. If you have any questions about health, wellness, SHAC, or anything we discussed in this podcast, please fill out the Google Form in the episode description. Thanks for listening and take care. We'll see you next week on WHAT's Up: wellness from the third floor.

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