For those living with asthma and allergies, cleaning without causing aggravating symptoms can be a challenge. Extra precautions can be taken to help decrease the risk of getting sick while cleaning.

**GOOD VENTILATION**

For many, wearing a mask is tolerable and will decrease the amount of dust and pet dander breathed in. In addition, opening windows while cleaning can improve indoor air exchange but should be avoided if you are sensitive to spring tree pollen.

Choice of Products: Avoid cleaning products with harsh chemicals and perfumes. Many environmentally-safe products are on the market such as Seventh Generation and Method. You can also make your own products which are just as effective.

**CARPETS**

Baking soda is an excellent way to decrease carpet odors. Sprinkle and rub into carpet, allow to sit for an hour, then vacuum. Be sure to empty vacuum bags outside, and wear a mask. Any carpeting with water damage or mold should be removed.

**WINDOWS**

Consider using vinegar to clean windows. Mix 2 tablespoons vinegar in 1 quart of warm water. Pour into a spray bottle for easy application.

**ALL PURPOSE CLEANER**

Tea tree oil and lemon extract have antimicrobial properties which make them powerful toxin-free cleaners. Mix 20 drops tea tree oil, 10 drops lemon extract and one quart warm water for an excellent flooring and countertop cleaning solution. For dirtier areas, mix a combination of 2 cups vinegar, 2 cups borax, 2 cups hot water and half a cup of salt. Apply the solution to the problem area and let sit for 30 minutes. Use a soft bristled brush to clean, and rinse with water.

Spring cleaning is possible without causing a significant increase in your asthma and allergy symptoms. Keeping your indoor environment clean can help decrease your triggers and allow you and your family to have a healthy spring.

**BONUS TIPS**

- Skip perfumed deodorizers and give your home a fresh, natural scent by boiling cinnamon and herbs.
- The bottoms of shoes may contain dirt and toxins. Provide a doormat at each door and encourage family members and guests to “leave toxins at the door” by removing their shoes upon entry to your home. Not only does this keep your home safe, it helps keep it clean.
Use MU Healthe for all your allergy needs

This winter, we started using MU Healthe to make accessing allergy services even easier for you. Once you create an account, you can:

1. Schedule an allergy appointment with your provider
2. Schedule allergy injection visits
3. Schedule yearly allergy follow-ups through an e-Visit
4. View physician notes and most test results
5. Send secure messages to your allergy team

If you are interested in scheduling an appointment for your injections, click on “schedule appointments.” Search for your provider (“Keene Allergy Nurse”). Once you click on “Keene Allergy Nurse,” you will be able to see the open slots for allergy injections. Appointments can be scheduled up to four weeks out. Scheduling online saves you time by eliminating having to stand in line at the allergy clinic.

In addition to in-person appointments, you can schedule yearly follow-ups through an online e-Visit. e-Visits are easy to access and can be done from the comfort of your home. This visit consists of answering generic questions and sending them to your provider. The provider will then send more specific allergy questions for you to answer. Depending on your answers, your provider will say it is okay to continue shots or drops, or he or she may recommend you come into the clinic to talk one-on-one. To schedule and e-Visit, login to your MU Healthe account and click on “schedule appointments.” Click on “e-Visit” at the bottom of the page and search for your provider’s name.

To take advantage of these options and sign up for MU Healthe, please contact the MU ENT and Allergy Center at 573-817-3000.

INNOVATION FINDS A WAY

Every day, our two full-time mixers create 30-40 vials for allergy injections and drops for our patients. That is a lot of mixing! We want to be sure we are always mixing the fastest and safest way possible. In our passion for patient safety, we have implemented a system called Xtract Solutions for the mixing of allergy vials.

We currently use Xtract Solutions to make sure we are creating the correct mix for each patient and that the exact amount of antigen is placed in each vial. If we accidentally try to put the wrong antigen in a vial, the machine will send us a warning. A similar warning will be sent if we have too little or too much antigen in a vial. This system has helped streamline our entire mixing process and has many more features that we plan on taking advantage of in the future. We are currently creating the ability for your provider to see when you are having reactions or flare-up symptoms due to high pollen counts. The results will be compiled in graph form making it easier for your provider to know when to adjust your dose or possibly adjust your mix. Thanks to Xtract Solutions, we are making sure we mix each vial correctly, safely and efficiently.
Spring means time to enjoy the great outdoors!

But what about my allergies?

**SPRING IS HERE**

That means sunny days, flowers blooming and spring allergies. If you are like many people, you want to get outside, enjoy the nice weather and finally do some outdoor exercise. If you are one of the more than 35 million Americans with seasonal allergic rhinitis, or hay fever, you might be hesitant to go for that jog or bike ride. The truth is, you can still venture outdoors and enjoy it, too. Here are some tips on how to enjoy being active outside while still controlling your allergy symptoms.

**WATCH OUT FOR POLLENS**

Pollen seasons are predictable. If you know you are allergic to certain tree or grass pollens, find out when the season starts in your area. Once you know, you can prepare by taking antihistamines and nasal steroids a week or two before the season starts. Local pollen counts are available on the internet and in the paper. There are certain times of day when pollen counts are high, and certain weather can make pollen counts worse. In general, pollen counts are highest on warm and windy mornings and low on cool and rainy days. It is important to pay attention to the levels of ozone and other pollutants. Exhaust from cars and trucks can also cause problems for individuals with allergies, especially if you exercise in a city or on a busy street.

Use your nose! When you are exercising outside, be sure to breathe through your nose. Your nose filters incoming air which helps humidify the air and keep allergens out. To avoid getting pollen and other irritants into your system, wear a mask or bandanna over your nose and mouth.

**SWITCH IT UP**

If the pollen counts are high and you still want to be active outside, consider changing your exercise routine to a less stressful activity. If you usually jog, try walking, instead. The more stressful the exercise, the faster you breathe. Consider doing activities on concrete instead of grass, such as tennis or basketball. If you know that you are allergic to grass, it might be best to avoid golf and try something different, such as swimming.

**WASH YOUR TROUBLES AWAY**

When you come inside following outdoor activities, be sure to change your clothes and take a shower.

You don’t want to continue wearing clothes that have pollens on them. Taking a shower helps wash off pollen and irritants that are on your skin and in your hair. Not only does this benefit you, it will also help protect family members and roommates who may have allergies.

**PLAY IT SAFE**

If pollen counts are extremely high, it might be best to stay inside and use the treadmill.

To schedule an appointment, please call 573-817-3000.
In February, MU Health Care welcomed Dr. Christine Franzese as a general otolaryngologist/otolaryngic allergist and professor in the department of otolaryngology at the University of Missouri School of Medicine. Franzese received her MD from SUNY Upstate Medical Center and completed her residency training at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and the University of Mississippi Medical Center. She acted as residency program director at the University of Mississippi Medical Center for eight years and was also an associate professor and chief of otolaryngology at the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center.

In addition to her role at MU Health Care, Franzese is currently serving as treasurer of the American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy (AAOA) and is a consultant to the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) Allergy and Immunology Committee. She is the immediate past chair for the section of Women in Otolaryngology for AAO-HNS. Franzese has taught many courses for AAOA including both the basic and advanced allergy and immunology courses. She is currently co-course director for the AAOA CORE Basic/MOC Allergy Course.

Franzese served as the first president of the Society of University Otolaryngologists Otolaryngology Program Directors Organization. She is a member of the AAO-HNS Rhinology and Paranasal Sinuses committee and a member-at-large on the AAOA board of directors. Franzese has authored many scientific papers and has a special focus on treating allergic disorders; including inhalant allergy, penicillin allergy, allergies to stinging insects, food allergy, and urticarial.