

Children's Health

Don't Let Allergies Sideline Your Kids

(NAPSA)—Allergies can get in the way of your child's playing and enjoying sports. Teaming up with your doctor can be the best way to get your child off the sidelines and back into the game.

Whether it's baseball, soccer, or field hockey, about 25 million children ages six to 16 play school sports in the United States, and about 20 million more play on extracurricular athletic teams.

Many of the six million children who suffer from allergies may find it difficult to focus on their game. Allergies can affect their judgment, energy level, and concentration.

There are two types of allergic conjunctivitis: seasonal and perennial (year-round). Seasonal allergic conjunctivitis is caused by airborne allergens such as molds or tree, weed, and grass pollen, whereas perennial allergic conjunctivitis is caused by other environmental allergens such as animal dander and dust mites.

Avoiding these allergens is a good idea, but it is not practical for children who enjoy outdoor sports.

Simple measures may help. Kids should avoid play or practice in the morning when pollen counts tend to be higher. Applying cold compresses to the eyes also can soothe the itching. Tell your child not to rub his or her eyes; rubbing releases chemicals that worsen the itch.

The most effective action may be to take your child to an allergist or ophthalmologist. These specialists can accurately diagnose your child and prescribe an appropriate medication.

One available treatment is



Avoiding allergens is not easy for children who enjoy sports, but new medication can help.

OPTIVAR (azelastine hydrochloride ophthalmic solution), 0.05%, a prescription eye drop for itching of the eyes associated with allergic conjunctivitis in adults and children ages three and older.

Studies have shown that twice-daily OPTIVAR works within three minutes, and continues protecting against allergy-causing irritants for eight to 10 hours.

In studies, the most frequently reported adverse events with OPTIVAR were mild, and included brief eye burning/stinging, headache, and bitter taste.

Discontinuation due to these adverse events was less than one percent with OPTIVAR. The recommended dose for OPTIVAR is one drop in each affected eye twice a day in adults and children three years of age and older.

If eye allergies are causing a "time out" in your child's athletic activities, seek a doctor's care to "score a home run" in allergy relief for your child.

For more information on OPTIVAR or allergic conjunctivitis, visit <http://www.medpointeinc.com/optivar> or call 800-526-3840.