

New Laws Make Finding Allergy Treatments More Difficult Ⓜ

(NAPSA)—Pollen is in the air and a fierce allergy season is underway, affecting an estimated 36 million Americans with seasonal allergies. Many sufferers with stuffy noses or watery eyes will visit their pharmacies for relief, but this year they may not find their familiar medications on store shelves.

Many states have restricted access to some popular over-the-counter treatments for nasal congestion because they contain pseudoephedrine, a common ingredient in decongestant medications that has been used to make illegal drugs.

As a decongestant, pseudoephedrine is safe and effective when used as directed, but the state laws mean allergy sufferers may have to ask for these treatments at the pharmacy counter, sign an official registry to monitor their purchases, or show photo identification before purchasing. And some states also have imposed limits on how much medicine a customer can buy.

In addition to state laws, the president recently signed federal restrictions on these decongestants, which will eventually lead to national regulations for pseudoephedrine at the pharmacy.

What's an Allergy Sufferer to Do?

These provisions make seeing a doctor even more important this season. A physician can properly diagnose allergies and prescribe the appropriate medications to treat symptoms. Combination antihistamine and decongestant treatments, such as CLARINEX-D® 12 HOUR (desloratadine 2.5 mg/pseudoephedrine sulfate, USP 120 mg) Extended Release Tablets, are available by prescription to help control both the nasal and non-nasal symptoms of allergic rhinitis, also called “hay fever.” These treatments are not affected by the new restrictions and can be obtained at the pharmacy like any other prescription medication.

“It can be difficult for patients to find the right medication at the pharmacy, with an overwhelming number of different options on the shelves,” said Dr. Sandra Gawchik, co-director of the Division of Allergy and Clinical Immunology at the Crozer-Chester Medical Center in Upland, Pa. “That’s why it’s important to work with a doctor, who can develop a treatment regimen tailored for the needs of each patient.”

Seasonal allergy symptoms, which are caused by pollen from trees and grass, may include any

blend of nasal congestion, itchy or watery eyes, scratchy throat, a runny nose and sneezing.

“My patients often say their symptoms are the most severe in the morning, and that nasal congestion is their most bothersome one,” said Dr. Gawchik. “For these patients, I typically suggest an antihistamine and decongestant combination treatment, which will help alleviate their nasal congestion and also relieve their other symptoms.”

Tips to Manage Allergy Symptoms

Dr. Gawchik recommends the following to help allergy sufferers reduce their exposure to pollen:

- Keep your windows closed while driving or at home.
- Change clothes or take a shower to remove pollen after returning from outside.
- Limit outdoor activities from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m., when pollen counts are typically higher.
- Visit www.allergyrelief.com each day to check your local allergy forecast.

“It’s impossible to completely avoid symptom-causing pollen, but you don’t have to suffer,” said Dr. Gawchik. “By working with your doctor and taking your medication throughout the season, you can wake up each morning with your allergy symptoms under control.”



Twice daily CLARINEX-D® 12 HOUR (desloratadine 2.5 mg and pseudoephedrine sulfate, USP 120 mg) Extended Release Tablets treat the symptoms of seasonal allergies, including nasal congestion, in patients 12 years and older. Due to its pseudoephedrine component, CLARINEX-D® 12 HOUR Extended Release Tablets should not be taken by patients with narrow-angle glaucoma (abnormally high eye pressure), difficulty urinating, severe high blood pressure, or severe heart disease, or by patients who have taken a monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitor within the past fourteen (14) days. Patients with high blood pressure; diabetes; heart disease; increased intraocular pressure (eye pressure); thyroid, liver or kidney problems; or enlarged prostate should check with their healthcare provider before taking CLARINEX-D® 12 HOUR Extended Release Tablets. Care should be used if CLARINEX-D® 12 HOUR is taken with other antihistamines or decongestants because combined effects on the cardiovascular system may be harmful. The most commonly reported adverse events for CLARINEX-D® 12 HOUR Extended Release Tablets were, insomnia, headache, dry mouth, fatigue, drowsiness, sore throat, and dizziness. For additional important safety information, full prescribing information is available at: <http://www.spfiles.com/piclarinex.pdf>.