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WebMD Data Predict Worst Allergy Season in Last Four Years

NEW YORK, May 13, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- WebMD (Nasdaq: WBMD), the leading source of health information, today announced that consumers, after suffering through a "Polar Vortex" that brought record snowfall and disruption to cities across the U.S., are in for an intense allergy season as a result of the "Pollen Vortex" currently affecting the nation. Over 7 million monthly visitors to WebMD have been diagnosed as suffering from allergies.¹ WebMD has leveraged Symptom Checker data and other insights gleaned from its audience of allergy sufferers to provide tools and resources that can help them navigate the Vortex and better manage their allergy symptoms.

According to WebMD data, with soaring pollen counts stemming from blooming trees coupled with seasonal moisture and rain, many regions across the nation are experiencing their worst allergy season in the last 4 years. As illustrated by the [WebMD Allergy Map](#), consumers in the Southwest are experiencing the worst case of allergies so far, in large part due to tree pollination and potentially from this season's increased rainfall. Close behind, the Pacific Northwest, West and Southeast have seen dramatically increased levels of allergy symptoms from trees, but there are signs the situation is tapering off. The Northeast is still gaining momentum and experiencing high symptoms. While the Midwest region is still enjoying some symptom downtime, WebMD is seeing evidence of allergy symptoms on the rise and suggests that all regions brace themselves for an accelerated spring allergy season.

"In recent years, allergy seasons have grown increasingly intense due to several possible factors," said Dr. Michael Smith, WebMD Chief Medical Editor. "For people with tree and mold allergies, this year is likely to be even more challenging due to the confluence of multiple factors, including trees blooming all at once due to the long, cold winter and mold that thrives in rain and moisture that much of us have been experiencing."

With one of the worst allergy seasons on hand, consumers can keep in mind the following tips when combating allergy symptoms this season:

Pollen Allergy

- **Take daily treatments.** Over-the-counter and prescription antihistamines, nasal decongestants, steroid nasal sprays, and drugs that combine antihistamines and decongestants are recommended on a daily basis. Allergy shots, also called immunotherapy, are also an option for highly allergic individuals.
- **Wind down on windy days.** Prevent pollen allergy symptoms by staying indoors on windy days or when pollen counts are high. Also, close windows, use air conditioning, and refrain from hanging clothes out to dry during the pollen season.

Dust Mite Allergy

- **Cover it up.** Help prevent dust mite allergies by putting dust mite covers over mattresses, pillows, and box springs. Use hypoallergenic pillows, wash sheets weekly in hot water, and keep all areas of the house, especially the bedroom, free of dust-collecting items.
- **Handle the humidity.** Keep the humidity below 50%. Make sure your home is set at a comfortable temperature that doesn't foster moisture buildup and humidity.

Mold Allergy

- **Leave the leaves.** Help prevent mold allergies by avoiding activities that trigger symptoms, such as clearing leaves. Use a mask while removing the leaves if you are allergic.
- **Avoid indoor plants.** Keep indoor plants to a minimum since their soil harbors and promotes mold growth.

WebMD Resources for Allergy Season:

[WebMD Allergy app](#)

The free [WebMD Allergy app](#) for iPhone and Android tracks allergy activity and provides users with personalized notifications that warn when allergen levels are high. The app also enables users to print their allergy report and share it with their doctors,

fostering more informed discussions that lead to stronger outcomes and better patient health.

[WebMD Allergy Map](#)

The [WebMD Allergy Map](#) provides allergy sufferers with personalized location-based allergy forecasts in combination with WebMD's trusted information, to help consumers proactively manage their allergies and their family's allergies.

About WebMD

WebMD Health Corp. (NASDAQ: WBMD) is the leading provider of health information services, serving consumers, physicians, healthcare professionals, employers, and health plans through our public and private online portals, mobile platforms and health-focused publications.

The WebMD Health Network includes WebMD Health, Medscape, MedicineNet, emedicineHealth, RxList, [theheart.org](#), Medscape Education and other owned WebMD sites.

¹ Source: 2013 WebMD Consumer Profile Study

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