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## Don't let allergies take the fun out of summer

many trees are pollinating at the same time unlike the usual staggered season. As a result, the 2014 allergy season is expected to be a short but tough one.

Canadians with allergies are often quick to seek help for their sneezing, sniffling and nasal congestion. But allergies can also have a painful effect on the eyes, causing them to be red, itchy, burning, and watery.

Like all allergies, those that afflict the eyes are caused by a glitch in the body's immune system. "The trouble starts when the conjunctiva (the mucous membrane that lines the eyelids and covers the whites of the eyes)

This year's long winter means that comes into contact with something that, while actually harmless, is seen as a threat," says Dr. Jason Saunders, a Canadian doctor of optometry. "In a mistaken attempt to fight off the threat, the immune system makes antibodies that cause the eyes to release histamine and other substances that, in turn, makes eyes red, itchy and wa-

> For seasonal eye allergy sufferers, it is recommended to begin treatment early in the season. "I instruct my patients to begin a preventative regimen as early as March if they have a known seasonal allergy because it's easier to control symptoms," says Dr. Saunders.









