

## <Health> —Hay Fever—

Today, *kafunsho*, or hay fever, is called a “national affliction” in Japan. From around mid-February, when the cedar trees begin to disperse their pollen, many people become afflicted with uncomfortable symptoms, such as itchy eyes, sneezing, and runny or blocked noses.

At first glance, hay fever symptoms seem like those of a cold, but there are some differences: for example, when you have hay fever, you do not have a fever or sore throat, and you sneeze continuously. Hay fever is a type of allergic reaction in which your body’s immune system reacts to a foreign substance from outside the body (pollen), and so the important thing is to try not to come into contact with pollen.

There are a number of things that you can do. Don’t leave your window open, and try as much as possible not to air your futon or dry your washing outside. Wear a mask when you go out; when you come home, brush the pollen off your clothes before you go inside; and wash your hands and gargle after you go inside.

If you do get hay fever symptoms, like itchy eyes, coughing or a runny nose, it can affect your ability to concentrate at work and in your daily life, and so you should go to see a doctor straightaway.

## <健康> —花粉症—

日本において、いまや国民病ともいわれる花粉症。2月の中旬ごろよりスギの花粉が飛び始め、目のかゆみ、くしゃみ、鼻水、鼻づまりなどの不快な症状に悩まされる人が多くなります。

花粉症は、一見風邪の症状と似ていますが、発熱やのどの痛みはなく、くしゃみが断続的に続くなどの特徴があります。花粉症はアレルギー反応のひとつで、外界から身体に侵入してくる異物に対する免疫反応なので、基本的には花粉との接触を避けることが大切です。

窓を開けっ放しにしない、外に布団や洗濯物を極力干さない、外出する際にはマスク等を着用する、家に入る前には花粉を払い落とす、帰宅後は手洗いやうがいを習慣にするなどを心がけましょう。

目がかゆい、咳や鼻水が出る等の症状が出たら、作業や日常生活の上での集中力の低下にもつながりますので、早めに医療機関で受診しましょう。