

Japanese companies provide hay fever support for employees

Vocabulary Match

subsidize • pollen • allowance • symptoms • prescriptions • logistics •
• allergen • a grant • to fund • medications • transportation • effects

Article

As cedar pollen levels are predicted to reach their highest in a decade, Japanese companies are providing employees with "hay fever allowances" and free medication to help ease symptoms.

Lafool, a Tokyo-based healthcare data tech firm, covers the full cost of medical treatments and prescriptions for its staff experiencing hay fever symptoms. The company also distributes masks, eye drops, and tissues.

"I think it's helped a lot with motivation and productivity," said Naoto Osawa, Director of Public Relations at Lafool.

Japan Knowledge Space, a system developer, and Hokuo Ryutsu, a food distribution and logistics company, also support their employees by subsidizing medical costs for hay fever treatment and medication. The latter does so to protect its drivers from serious accidents.

According to the Japanese Society of Allergology, hay fever and nasal allergies lead to an annual economic loss of about ¥5 trillion caused by a decline in labor productivity.

Quiz

1. Why are companies providing employees with "hay fever allowances" and free medication?
2. Why does Hokuo Ryutsu subsidize medical costs for hay fever treatment and medication?

Conversation

A: I heard that cedar pollen levels in Japan are really high this year.

B: Yeah, it's been tough. Do you get hay fever in the UK?

A: Yes, but it's different. We have birch pollen in the spring and grass pollen in the summer.

B: Ah, we have those here too, but cedar pollen is the worst. My eyes are always itchy.

A: I feel you. I always carry tissues and eye drops this time of year.

Discussion

1. Do you suffer from hay fever? What do you do to reduce the symptoms?
2. What do you think about Japanese companies supporting their staff during hay fever season?
3. Some people take vacations to low-pollen regions. Where would you go to escape hay fever?