



Tips To Control Seasonal Allergies

Seasonal allergies affect more than 35 million people in the United States. Often incorrectly referred to as hay fever, seasonal allergies have nothing to do with hay and fever is not typically caused by allergies. Instead, seasonal allergies are most often caused by airborne pollen and mold spores, usually most prevalent in spring and fall.

Pollen are tiny, powdery granules necessary for plant fertilization. Pollen from plants with bright flowers, such as roses, usually do not trigger allergies as they are carried from plant to plant by bees and other insects and are not windborne. On the other hand, many other trees, grasses and weeds have small, dry and light pollen that are windborne and trigger allergies.

Early spring allergies are usually due to tree pollen such as oak, ash, elm, birch, maple and hickory. Late spring and early summer allergies are due to grasses such as bluegrass, timothy, Bermuda and orchard. Ragweed, among other weeds, is the major cause of seasonal allergies during late summer and fall. Weather conditions can affect the pollen counts at any given time. Pollen season usually starts later in the spring the further north one goes.

Molds are microscopic fungi related to mushrooms, but without stems, roots or leaves. Their spores float in the air just like pollen and are present throughout the year. Although they do not have a specific season, molds are affected by weather conditions. Outdoor mold spores begin to appear after spring thaw and reach their peak between July in warmer states and October in colder states. They can be found in soil, vegetation and rotting wood. They are also found indoors in attics, basements, bathrooms, refrigerators and other food storage areas.

Pollen and mold counts measure the amount of airborne allergens in the air. National Allergy Bureau (NAB) is the nation's only pollen and mold counting network certified by American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI). These counts are available on the NAB page of the AAAAI's web site, www.aaaai.org or by clicking here.

Weather can affect seasonal allergy symptoms. Pollen counts and mold spores are minimal on rainy, cloudy or windless days and become much worse on hot, dry and windy days. Moving to another area of the country usually does not help with allergy symptoms as many pollen and molds are common to most plant zones in the US. Additionally, other related plants can also trigger symptoms. New allergies can also be acquired after moving into a new area.

Do's and Don'ts For Patient's With Seasonal Allergies

1. Do keep windows closed at night to prevent pollen and mold from entering your home.
2. Do use air-conditioning which cleans, cools and dries the air.
3. Do minimize early morning activity, between 5 AM and 10 AM, when pollens are emitted.
4. Do keep your car windows closed with the air conditioner on when traveling.
5. Do try to stay indoors when pollen counts are high, and on high humidity, dry and windy days.
6. Do try to take a vacation during the height of the pollen season to a more pollen-free area, such as the beach.
7. Do take all your allergy medications as prescribed.
8. Don't mow lawns or be around freshly cut grass. Mowing stirs up pollen.
9. Don't rake leaves, as this may stir up the mold spores.
10. Don't hang clothing out to dry as pollen and mold may collect on them.
11. Don't grow too many indoor plants if you are allergic to mold. Wet soil encourages mold growth.

If you have questions about how to control your Seasonal Allergies, feel free to contact our office at 614-760-0099. One of our staff would be happy to answer your questions about Seasonal Allergies and treatment options offered at Allergy & Asthma Clinics of Ohio.