

## Coping with Allergy Season

Sneezing, irritated skin, watery eyes – it's springtime again, and allergy season is upon us. Allergies are triggered by grass, ragweed pollen, mold, vegetation, and rotting wood. Allergy season varies in response to temperatures, wind currents, rainfall, and humidity levels. In terms of health, wellness, and productivity, asthma is one of this country's most common and costliest diseases. In fact, according to estimates, costs associated with allergy treatment and low productivity at work reach more than \$2.5 billion a year.

For susceptible persons, a number of irritants can trigger allergic reactions or asthmatic symptoms, with some professions creating greater risk than others. Many people struggle with dust mites & wood dust seasonal allergies plague people in spring outdoor environments; and anyone using chemicals should be familiar with chemical vapors that may irritate nasal and lung passageways. Safety Data Sheets can help educate you.

To identify allergy triggers, look for chemical fumes, smoke, insects, dust, paint, mold and mildew, perfumes and scented products, dyes, and fumes. To lessen or eliminate these triggers, ensure that areas are well ventilated, with less than 50 percent humidity to minimize molds, and kept clean and dust-free on a regular basis. Keep windows closed to lessen humidity levels.

For those affected by seasonal allergies, it is important to stay informed about local allergen conditions, check pollen counts in the area, and plan outside activities accordingly. Typically, pollen counts are lower on cold, wet days and higher on warm, windy days, peaking in the morning hours and bottoming out in the afternoon.

### TOP 10 TIPS TO REDUCE SPRING ALLERGIES

1. At home and in the car, close the windows and run the air conditioning, if needed.
2. When pollen and mold levels are high, stay indoors.
3. Wear a pollen mask during a prolonged stay outdoors.
4. When you come inside, wash your hair and change your clothes.
5. Ask someone else to mow the lawn and rake leaves.
6. Consider hosing the pollen off your car and front porch often.
7. Don't wear outside shoes in the house.
8. Don't hang clothing or linens outside to dry.
9. Take allergy medication as prescribed.
10. See your physicians if symptoms are worse than normal or become unbearable.

Other sources of information on seasonal allergies:

<http://www.wafb.com/story/37743165/top-tips-to-reduce-spring-allergies>

<https://ehealthiq.com/5-tips-for-dealing-with-seasonal-allergies/>

<http://www.thebaynet.com/articles/0418/tips-on-overcoming-spring-allergies-.html>