



Asthma

Environmental Allergies

Sinusitis

Urticaria

Food Allergies

Insect Allergy

Atopic Dermatitis

Contact Dermatitis

Drug Allergy

Immunodeficiency

Occupational Allergy

Anaphylaxis

Bronchitis

Chronic Cough

Allergic Rhinitis

Immunotherapy

## Environmental Allergies



Asthma is one of our nation's most common chronic health conditions. Many substances can aggravate allergies or increase the severity of asthma symptoms in individuals who are sensitive to these allergens or irritants.

This informational page is designed to help you **SURVIVE THE SEASONS** by providing information on asthma, allergies and some of the most common seasonal and non-seasonal allergens and asthma irritants such as:

- Cigarette Smoke
- Cockroaches
- Dust Mites
- Mold
- Pets & Animals
- Pollen

In addition, we provide **PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES** for each to help you avoid exposure to these substances.

Please remember that information contained on this Web site is provided for educational and informational purposes only and should not be used to guide the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition without the advice and supervision of a licensed, qualified health care provider.

Source: <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/conditions/asthma/allergens/index.cfm>

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## Cigarette Smoke



Cigarette smoke contains a number of toxic chemicals and irritants. People with allergies may be more sensitive to cigarette smoke than others and research studies indicate that smoking may aggravate allergies.

Smoking does not just harm smokers but also those around them. Research has shown that children and spouses of smokers tend to have more respiratory infections and asthma than those of non-smokers. In addition, exposure to secondhand smoke can increase the risk of allergic complications such as sinusitis.

Common symptoms of smoke irritation are burning or watery eyes, nasal congestion, coughing, hoarseness and shortness of breath presenting as a wheeze.

### Preventive Strategies

- Don't smoke and if you do, seek support to quit smoking. Contact Puff-Free Partners, such as:

[National Cancer Institute](#)

1-800-QUIT-NOW

[Nicotine Anonymous](#)

1-415-750-0328

[American Lung Association](#)

1-800-LUNG-USA

[Centers for Disease Control](#)

1-800-CDC-1311

[American Cancer Society](#)

1-800-ACS-2345

- Seek smoke-free environments in restaurants, theaters and hotel rooms.
- Avoid smoking in closed areas like homes or cars where others may be

If you think you may have environmental allergies to cigarettes or trouble breathing, feel free to schedule an appointment with us at: (516)-822-6655

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## Cockroaches



Cockroaches are one of the most common and allergenic of indoor pests. Recent studies have found a strong association between the presence of cockroaches and increases in the severity of asthma symptoms in individuals who are sensitive to cockroach allergens.

These pests are common even in the cleanest of crowded urban areas and older dwellings. They are found in all types of neighborhoods.

The proteins found in cockroach saliva are particularly allergenic but the body and droppings of cockroaches also contain allergenic proteins.

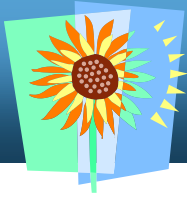
### Preventive Strategies

- Keep food and garbage in closed, tight-lidded containers. Never leave food out in the kitchen.
- Do not leave out pet food or dirty food bowls.
- Eliminate water sources that attract these pests, such as leaky faucets and drain pipes.
- Mop the kitchen floor and wash countertops at least once a week.
- Plug up crevices around the house through which cockroaches can enter.
- Limit the spread of food around the house and especially keep food out of bedrooms.
- Use bait stations and other environmentally safe pesticides to reduce cockroach infestation.

If you think you may have allergies to any pests (such as cockroaches), feel free to schedule an appointment with us at: (516)-822-6655

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## Dust Mites



Dust mites are tiny microscopic relatives of the spider and live on mattresses, bedding, upholstered furniture, carpets and curtains.

These tiny creatures feed on the flakes of skin that people and pets shed daily and they thrive in warm and humid environments.

No matter how clean a home is, dust mites cannot be totally eliminated. However, the number of mites can be reduced by following the suggestions below.

### Preventive Strategies

- Use a dehumidifier or air conditioner to maintain relative humidity at about 50% or below.
- Encase your mattress and pillows in dust-proof or allergen impermeable covers (available from specialty supply mail order companies, bedding and some department stores).
- Wash all bedding and blankets once a week in hot water (at least 130 - 140°F) to kill dust mites. Non-washable bedding can be frozen overnight to kill dust mites.
- Replace wool or feathered bedding with synthetic materials and traditional stuffed animals with washable ones.
- If possible, replace wall-to-wall carpets in bedrooms with bare floors (linoleum, tile or wood) and remove fabric curtains and upholstered furniture.
- Use a damp mop or rag to remove dust. Never use a dry cloth since this just stirs up mite allergens.
- Use a vacuum cleaner with either a double-layered micro filter bag or a HEPA filter to trap allergens that pass through a vacuum's exhaust.
- Wear a mask while vacuuming to avoid inhaling allergens, and stay out of the vacuumed area for 20 minutes to allow any dust and allergens to settle after vacuuming.

If you think you may have allergies to any dust mites, feel free to schedule an appointment with us at: (516)-822-6655

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## Mold



Several molds that grow both indoors and outdoors, produce allergenic substances. These allergens can be found in mold spores and other fungal structures (e.g. hyphae). There is no definite seasonal pattern to molds that grow indoors. However outdoor molds are seasonal, first appearing in early spring and thriving until the first frost.

Indoor molds are found in dark, warm, humid and musty environments such as damp basements, cellars, attics, bathrooms and laundry rooms. They are also found where fresh food is stored, in refrigerator drip trays, garbage pails, air conditioners and humidifiers.

Outdoor molds grow in moist shady areas. They are common in soil, decaying vegetation, compost piles, rotting wood and fallen leaves.

### Preventive Strategies

- Use a dehumidifier or air conditioner to maintain relative humidity below 50% and keep temperatures cool.
- Vent bathrooms and clothes dryers to the outside, and run bathroom and kitchen vents while bathing and cooking.
- Regularly check faucets, pipes and ductwork for leaks.
- When first turning on home or car air conditioners leave the room or drive with the windows open for several minutes to allow mold spores to disperse.
- Remove decaying debris from the yard, roof and gutters.
- Avoid raking leaves, mowing lawns or working with peat, mulch, hay or dead wood. If you must do yard work, wear a mask and avoid working on hot, humid days

If you think you may have allergies to Mold, feel free to schedule an appointment with us at: (516)-822-6655

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## Pets & Animals



Many people think animal allergies are caused by the fur or feathers of their pet. In fact, allergies are actually aggravated by:

- proteins secreted by oil glands and shed as dander
- proteins in saliva (which stick to fur when animals lick themselves)
- aerosolized urine from rodents and guinea pigs

Keep in mind that you can sneeze with and without your pet being present. Although an animal may be out of sight, their allergens are not. This is because pet allergens are carried on very small particles. As a result pet allergens can remain circulating in the air and remain on carpets and furniture for weeks and months after a pet is gone. Allergens may also be present in public buildings, schools, etc. where there are no pets.

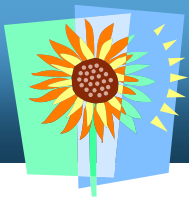
### Preventive Strategies

- Remove pets from your home if possible.
- If pet removal is not possible, keep them out of bedrooms and confined to areas without carpets or upholstered furniture.
- If possible, bathe pets weekly to reduce the amount of allergens.
- Wear a dust mask and gloves when near rodents.
- After playing with your pet, wash your hands and clean your clothes to remove pet allergens.
- Avoid contact with soiled litter cages.
- Dust often with a damp cloth.

If you think you may have allergies to any pets, feel free to schedule an appointment with us at: (516)-822-6655

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## Pollen



Ragweed and other weeds such as curly dock, lambs quarters, pigweed, plantain, sheep sorrel and sagebrush are some of the most prolific producers of pollen allergens.

Although the ragweed pollen season runs from August to November, ragweed pollen levels usually peak in mid-September in many areas in the country.

In addition, pollen counts are highest between 5 - 10 AM and on dry, hot and windy days.

### Preventive Strategies

- Avoid the outdoors between 5-10 AM. Save outside activities for late afternoon or after a heavy rain, when pollen levels are lower.
- Keep windows in your home and car closed to lower exposure to pollen. To keep cool, use air conditioners and avoid using window and attic fans.
- Be aware that pollen can also be transported indoors on people and pets.
- Dry your clothes in an automatic dryer rather than hanging them outside.

If you think you may have allergies to Pollen, feel free to schedule an appointment with us at: (516)-822-6655

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## Grass Pollen

As with tree pollen, grass pollen is regional as well as seasonal. In addition, grass pollen levels can be affected by temperature, time of day and rain.

Of the 1,200 species of grass that grow in North America, only a small percentage of these cause allergies. The most common grasses that can cause allergies are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bermuda grass</li> <li>• Johnson grass</li> <li>• Kentucky bluegrass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orchard grass</li> <li>• Sweet vernal grass</li> <li>• Timothy grass</li> </ul>
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## Preventive Strategies

### Specifically:

- If you have a grass lawn, have someone else do the mowing. If you must mow the lawn yourself, wear a mask.
- Keep grass cut short.
- Choose ground covers that don't produce much pollen, such as Irish moss, bunch, and dichondra.

### In General:

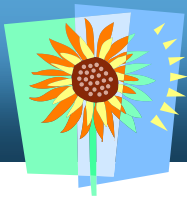
- Avoid the outdoors between 5-10 AM. Save outside activities for late afternoon or after a heavy rain, when pollen levels are lower.
- Keep windows in your home and car closed to lower exposure to pollen. To keep cool, use air conditioners and avoid using window and attic fans.
- Be aware that pollen can also be transported indoors on people and pets.
- Dry your clothes in an automatic dryer rather than hanging them outside. Otherwise pollen can collect on clothing and be carried indoors.

If you think you may have allergies to Grass Pollen, feel free to schedule an appointment with us at: (516)-822-6655

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## Tree Pollen

Trees are the earliest pollen producers, releasing their pollen as early as January in the Southern states and as late as May or June in the Northern states. Most allergies are specific to one type of tree such as:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• catalpa</li> <li>• elm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hickory</li> <li>• olive</li> <li>• pecan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sycamore</li> <li>• walnut</li> </ul>
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The female of these species are totally pollen-free:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ash</li> <li>• box elder</li> <li>• cottonwood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• date palm</li> <li>• maple (red)</li> <li>• maple (silver)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phoenix palm</li> <li>• poplar</li> <li>• willow</li> </ul>
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Some people, though, do show cross-reactivity among trees in the alder, beech, birch and oak family, and the juniper and cedar family.

### Preventive Strategies

- If you buy trees for your yard, look for species that do not aggravate allergies such as crape myrtle, dogwood, fig, fir, palm, pear, plum, redbud and redwood trees or the female cultivars of ash, box elder, cottonwood, maple, palm, poplar or willow trees.
- Avoid the outdoors between 5-10 AM. Save outside activities for late afternoon or after a heavy rain, when pollen levels are lower.
- Keep windows in your home and car closed to lower exposure to pollen. To keep cool, use air conditioners and avoid using window and attic fans.
- Be aware that pollen can also be transported indoors on people and pets.
- Dry your clothes in an automatic dryer rather than hanging them outside. Otherwise pollen can collect on clothing and be carried indoors.

If you think you may have allergies to Tree Pollen, feel free to schedule an appointment with us at: (516)-822-6655

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