

MANAGING FALL ALLERGIES



The colors are beginning to change, and the temperature is dropping, which means fall is in full swing. Unfortunately, that also means that allergies are running rampant.

Follow these tips for getting through allergy season so that you can enjoy your fall activities:

- **Get Allergy Tested.**

For fall, the main allergy is ragweed. This strong allergen can affect your nose, throat and eyes. If you have chronic lung disease such as asthma or COPD, exposure to ragweed can worsen your respiratory symptoms. If you suspect you have allergies, you should discuss getting tested with your healthcare provider. Many allergy medications are available over the counter, although you may not be treating what you are allergic to. Your test results will not only confirm what you are allergic to, but they can also help you determine when you are most likely to be affected and what treatments will work best for you.



- **Check Pollen Levels Daily.**

Before spending any time outdoors, check the pollen level. Use a local weather app or check the National Allergy Bureau online to see how high the pollen count is each day. If your allergies are severe, spending less time outdoors on dry, windy days may be a good idea. If pollen is high, you will want to take an antihistamine one hour before exposure. Pollen can also get in your eyes, so using eye drops and wearing glasses can ease symptoms as well.

- **Always Take Your Allergy Medication.**

Many allergy medications and nasal sprays that used to be prescription are now available over the counter. If fall is your peak allergy season, you may need to do a combination of medications, eye drops and nasal sprays. Some people may need allergy medication daily, while others may only need it a few times a week. Consult your healthcare provider to work out a system that will help you to best manage your symptoms.



- **Keep Your Indoor Area as Clean as Possible.**

Dust and vacuum frequently to avoid indoor allergens. If you have been outside for a walk or gardening, you likely have pollen on your clothes, skin, and hair. Consider placing your clothes directly in the washing machine to limit the pollen distributed throughout your house. Take a shower and wash your hair prior to going to bed to limit the amount of pollen that gets onto your pillow and bedding. Dust mites and mold thrive in hot, humid environments, so running a dehumidifier can help decrease the humidity, eliminating those allergies in your home. Fans can be another major dust and pollen spreader, so you should use them sparingly. Running a fan consistently can create an allergen storm, which you may breathe in as you sleep. Instead, consider using an air purifier with a HEPA air filter.



For more information on managing fall allergies, visit:

www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hay-fever/in-depth/seasonal-allergies/art-20048343



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