



## TREATMENT

Although there is no way to completely avoid airborne allergens, exposure to pollens can be minimized in several ways:

- Keep windows closed.
- Use air conditioning when needed if possible as it cleans, cools, and dries the air.
- Minimize early morning activity when pollen is usually emitted (between 5 and 10 a.m.).
- Keep car windows closed when traveling.
- Machine dry clothing and bedding.
- Stay indoors when pollen or mold levels are reported to be high/or wear a pollen mask if long periods of exposure are unavoidable.

Finding the right treatment plan is individualized and helps to alleviate symptoms for those who suffer with allergies. If your seasonal allergies are unbearable, seeing an allergist/immunologist can help. Treating seasonal allergies usually involves treating the symptoms with antihistamines or nasal steroids for **one to two weeks**. Allergy shots or immunotherapy are rarely needed **but are occasionally** recommended.

# Seasonal Allergies



Seasonal allergic rhinitis, also known as 'hay fever,' affects more than 35 million Americans and can have a negative impact on the quality of life for those who suffer from it. In addition to causing numerous symptoms, individuals are at an increased risk for developing illnesses such as asthma and sinusitis.

## WHAT ARE SEASONAL ALLERGIES?

A seasonal allergy is an allergic reaction to a trigger that is usually only present during part of a year. The primary triggers for seasonal allergic rhinitis are pollen and mold spores in the air. **Pollen** are tiny cells needed to fertilize plants; many plants have flowers which produce light dry pollen that are easily spread by the wind. (Colorful flowers usually do not cause allergies as they rely on insects to spread their pollen.) **Molds** are tiny fungi related to mushrooms and can be found almost anywhere including soil, plants, and rotting wood. Their spores float in the air like pollen and increase as temperatures rise, reaching their peak in July in warmer states and in October in colder states. Seasonal allergic rhinitis is often caused by tree pollen in the early spring, grasses in the late spring and early summer, and weeds in the late summer and fall.

## WHAT CAUSES SYMPTOMS?

When present in the air, pollen and mold spores can land in a person's eyes, nose, lungs, and on skin and cause an allergic reaction. When an individual has an allergy to pollen, for example, their immune system identifies the pollen as a foreign invader or *allergen*. The immune system overreacts by producing antibodies called immunoglobulin E. These antibodies then travel to cells that release chemicals called histamines, causing an allergic reaction. Symptoms can include **sneezing, a runny or stuffy nose, and itchiness in the nose, roof of the mouth, throat, eyes, or ears.**

## POLLEN AND MOLD LEVELS

In most areas of the country, pollen and mold spores are counted and measured, and different types are identified. The National Allergy Bureau (NAB) is recognized by the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) as a counting network which measures the amount of pollen and mold present in the air. You can find levels for your area by going to [www.aaaai.org/nab](http://www.aaaai.org/nab).

