

Ease the Discomfort

Living with allergies can be miserable for those who suffer from them. Utilize these tips for reducing allergy related symptoms:

- ◆ Avoid areas with freshly cut grass.
- ◆ Avoid irritants such as perfumes and cigarette smoke which can aggravate allergy symptoms.
- ◆ Minimize outdoor activity between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m. when pollen levels are highest.
- ◆ Close windows and use an air conditioner to reduce the amount of allergens entering your home.
- ◆ Avoid activities such as raking leaves, mowing the lawn and working with compost when feeling reactive.
- ◆ Ease the discomfort, call the pollen and mold hotline after 10 a.m. at 946-7753 or check levels at www.hcdoes.org.
- ◆ Keep a journal of daily counts and your allergic reactions.

Pollen and Mold Hotline 946-7753

When calling the pollen and mold hotline, the recording will give a total count or value for the most prevalent allergens for the previous 24-hours. The higher the pollen and mold count, the greater the likelihood that particles will make their way into the nasal passages and lungs and induce allergic symptoms.

	Pollen	Mold
Low	0-20	0-500
Moderate	21-100	501-1500
High	101-1000	1501-5000
Very High	>1000	>5000

Tracking Pollen and Mold Levels

Minimize your reactions to pollen and mold by doing the following:

Call the pollen and mold hotline daily at 946-7753 or track counts at www.hcdoes.org. Information provided is 0 for the previous 24-hour period.

Keep a journal of allergen levels and the symptoms, if you are feeling any on that day.

After a period of time, refer to your journal and correlate the days you had allergy symptoms to the highest count of pollens and molds on that day. Note the high symptom days and look for a pattern.

Once you have determined which allergens affect you, continue to call the hotline daily and monitor the highs and lows of those particular pollens or molds.

When the level of the pollen and/or mold that affects you begins to rise, follow the tips provided under "Ease the Discomfort."

Caution!

Keep in mind that pollen and mold counts affect everyone differently. An individual very sensitive to a specific allergen may have symptoms when total pollen and mold counts are in low to moderate range.

Note: Individual reactions to allergens vary. Always consult with your doctor if extreme allergic symptoms persist.

Living With Allergies



clearing the air about pollen and mold

**HAMILTON COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES**

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An allergy can be described as an abnormal reaction to a very small amount of a specific substance. More than 35 million Americans suffer from some type of allergy and not everyone is affected in the same way. People's resistance to allergens vary and so do the symptoms that occur with them. Runny nose, watery eyes and sneezing are common symptoms of allergy sufferers. If these symptoms last longer than 7 days, you are probably suffering from allergies.

In nature, there are two main sources from which airborne allergen particles originate: pollen and mold. This brochure identifies some common types of pollens in our area and gives an overview of mold.



Allergies

Hamilton County
Department of
Environmental Services
(HCDOES) Air
Quality Management
Division (AQMD)
tracks and monitors
daily levels of various
airborne allergens.

Pollen levels are only monitored during the chief growing season, generally from March to October.

Millions suffer from allergies but few people actually know how or why they are affected. This brochure answers some of the most frequently asked questions about airborne allergies:

What airborne allergens affect you most?

Where do they come from?

What time of the year are these allergens most prevalent?

How do I reduce the discomfort of allergy-related symptoms?

Tree and Grass Pollen

Plant pollens are one of the most common southwest Ohio allergens and can be almost impossible to escape. Trees, grasses and plants spread billions of pollens through the pollination process. Winds can spread pollens for hundreds of miles.

Pollens differ in each area of the country. The following is a listing of the most prevalent sources in southwest Ohio from late March through mid-July:

Oak	Elm
Cedar	Poplar
Mulberry	Box Elder
Maple	Grasses



After early June, the above tree pollens taper off. Grasses, which can be a major problem for allergy sufferers, pollinate from late May through mid-July. While the pollen count from grasses may not be very high at times, even a few grass pollens can elicit strong reactions in persons highly sensitive to them. Mowing the lawn also raises pollens, dust and molds, which triggers an allergic reaction.

Ragweed Pollen

Ambrosia, the scientific name for ragweed, means "food of the gods." While the gods may delight in their presence, the majority of allergy sufferers think otherwise.

Ragweed is the most allergenic plant of North America and is quite dominant in the Midwest. Ragweed plants produce billions of pollen grains which are easily caught by the wind and spread throughout the region. Few flowers are as efficient as Ragweed in dispersing pollen.

Heavy rainfall in the spring, combined with hot, dry weather are ideal growing conditions for ragweed plants. Ragweed blooms from August to the first week in October, with September being the peak month of its season.

The ragweed plant has fine, coarse hairs and a slight odor. Short ragweed withstands stressful growing conditions by putting its energy into its blooms which produce large quantities of pollen. Ragweed is often found along river banks, in abandoned lots, and unattended fields.

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Mold Spores

Mold or fungi prefer to grow in moist, warm areas, but even in the coldest of Ohio winters, mold is still present indoors. Winds can carry active mold spores from warmer climates into our region, but when they encounter cold air, they become dormant. Mold can also survive the cold by finding a home deep in the recesses of decomposing

trees, leaves and other plant and animals matter, using these items as a food source.

During summer months, the amount of mold spores increases and this can cause an onset of allergy symptoms in those most sensitive to them.

The most common outdoor mold spores can usually be found in decaying plant material. Alternaria is one of the most common outdoor molds which causes a reaction in allergy sufferers.

Mold can also grow indoors in bathrooms, kitchens, and near damp areas. The mold count given by the Department of Environmental Services' pollen and mold hotline is only a measure of outdoor mold levels.

Visit www.hcdoes.org for current
Pollen and Mold Counts