

Tracking Pollen and Mold Levels

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

- ◆ Call the pollen and mold hotline after 10 a.m. daily at (513) 946-7753 or track counts at www.hcdoes.org. Information provided is for the previous 24 hour period.
- ◆ Keep a journal of allergen levels and 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.
- ◆ 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 the low to moderate range.



Living with Allergies



clearing the air about pollen and mold

**HAMILTON COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES**

250 William Howard Taft Road • Cincinnati, OH 45219
Phone: 513-946-7777 • Fax: 513-946-7779

www.hcdoes.org

Allergies

An allergy is an abnormal reaction to a very small amount of a specific substance. More than 35 million Americans suffer from some type of allergy. People's resistance to allergens vary, as do their symptoms. Runny nose, watery eyes and sneezing are common symptoms for allergy sufferers. If these symptoms last longer than 7 days, you are probably suffering from allergies.

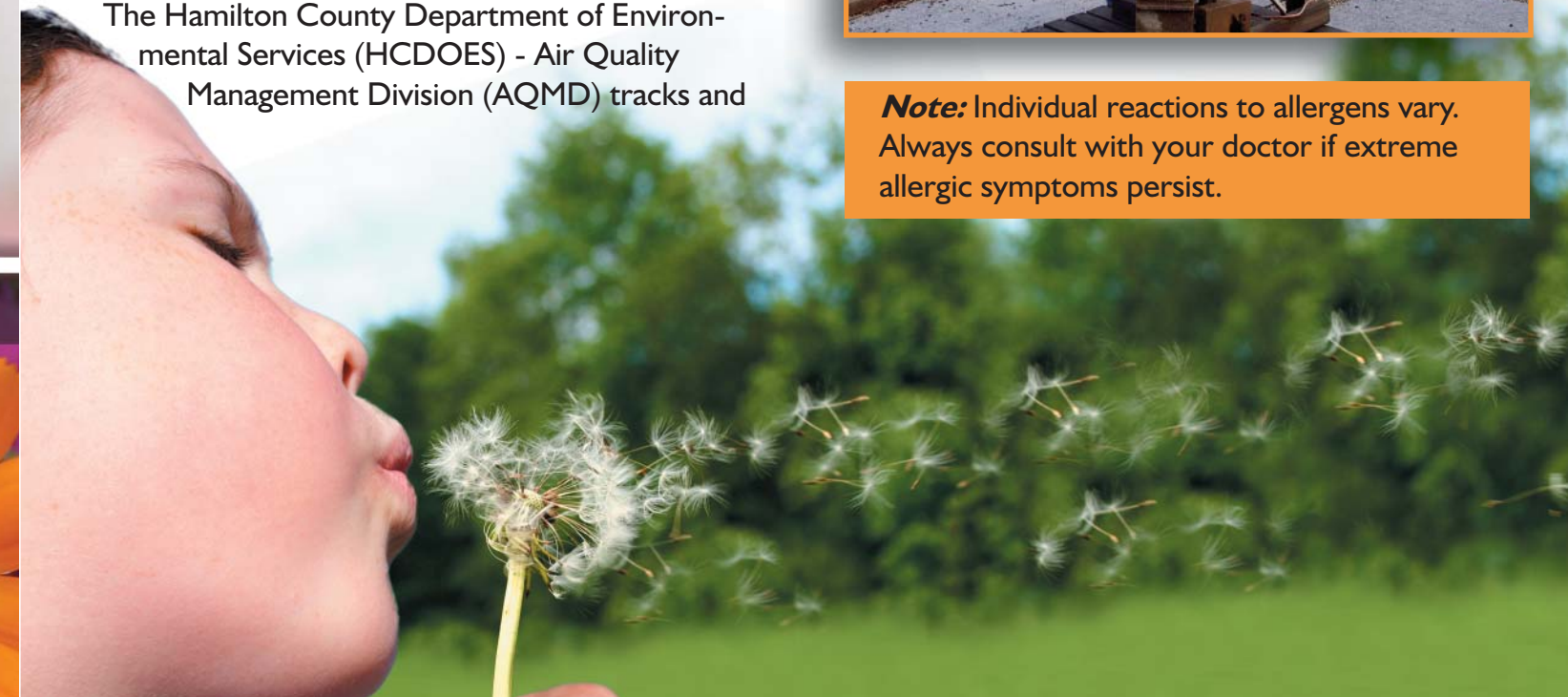
There are two main sources in nature from which airborne allergen particles originate: pollen and mold. This brochure identifies common types of pollens in our area and gives an overview of mold.

The Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services (HCDOES) - Air Quality Management Division (AQMD) tracks and

monitors daily levels of various airborne allergens. Pollen levels are monitored only during the chief growing season, generally from March to October.



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



Trees and Grass

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. Even a few grass pollens can elicit strong reactions in persons highly sensitive to them.



Ragweed Pollen

Ragweed is the most allergenic plant in 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.

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 riverbanks, in abandoned lots and unattended fields.



Mold Spores

Although mold prefers to grow in moist, warm areas, it can be carried into Ohio and lay dormant during the winter months until temperatures rise. Mold can grow easily indoors, regardless of season.

During summer months, the amount of mold spores increases, causing an onset of allergy symptoms in those most sensitive to mold.

Common outdoor mold spores can 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 HCDOES' pollen and mold hotline measures only outdoor mold levels.

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.
- ◆ 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.

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

Pollen and Mold Hotline: 513-946-7753