

## Outdoor Air Allergens

Millions of people suffer from “hay fever”, also known as seasonal allergies. Seasonal allergies are common during the Spring, Summer, and Fall in Ohio. People allergic to pollen or mold have an allergic reaction when pollen or mold spores enter their body.

Common allergic symptoms include:



- Sneezing
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Post nasal drip
- Itchy nose and throat
- Itchy watery eyes
- Dark circles under the eyes
- Asthma attacks for those with asthma

### Pollen and Mold Counts:

Counts measure the amount of pollen and mold in the air. Some places report pollen and mold separately and others report “total pollen” counts. Counts are done every day. The counts are released 1 or 2 days after the test. Since the number is not released the same day it is only a **general guide** for outside activity. Pollen and mold counts as low as 20 can cause allergic symptoms in some people.

### Pollen



Pollen is needed to help produce new plants. Most outdoor allergies are caused by powdery pollen carried on wind currents from plants, weeds, or trees. There is more pollen in the air on warm, dry, windy days. Pollens are not active after the first heavy frost.

- Trees release pollen in late Winter and Spring.
- Grasses releases pollen in Spring and Summer.
- Weeds release pollen in late Summer and early Fall.

### Actions to help pollen allergies:

Allergies symptoms from pollen can be less if you:

- Limit time outside when your allergies are the worst.
- Limit time outside when the pollen count remain high.
- Wear a mask if you must work outside during pollen season.
- Keep windows and doors closed during pollen season.
- Use the air conditioner (re-circulate) at home and in the car during pollen season.
- Talk to your doctor about medicines to block allergic symptoms.

### Mold



Mold and mildew are fungi that release spores into the air. Molds grow on dead trees, leaves and grass. The spores are spread on wind currents. Snow and freezing temperatures lowers mold counts but does not kill molds. Some mold spores are released in warm windy days and others are released when the air is damp or wet.

Actions to help mold allergies:

Allergy symptoms to mold can be less if you:

- Limit time outside when your allergies are worst.
- Limit time outside when the mold counts remain high.
- Have decaying debris removed from the yard, roof and gutters.
- Grade the yard to prevent standing water.
- Wear a mask if you must work outside during mold season.
- Avoid raking leaves; mowing grass; or working with compost, peat moss, mulch or hay.
- Use air conditioner at home and in the car during mold season (if your symptoms get worse when using an air conditioner, the system may have mold in it and must be checked).
- Talk to your doctor about medicines to block allergic symptoms.