



## Pollen Allergy

With the first signs of Spring and progressing into the Summer as well as the Fall months, you may frequently hear reports about pollen counts and their relationship to allergic symptoms. Plants which require the wind to carry pollen (instead of insects) cause most allergic outdoor reactions.

**Trees** pollinate in the late Winter and Spring (March through June). Examples are Elm, Maple, Oak, Cottonwood, Birch and Hickory.

**Grasses** pollinate in late Spring into Summer (May through August). Examples are June grass, Orchard grass, Meadow Fescue grass and Timothy grass.

**Weeds** pollinate in Fall usually (August through October). Examples are Ragweed, Pigweed, Lambs-Quarter and Cocklebur.

The highest concentration of released pollen occurs early in the morning, shortly after dawn, in close proximity to the plant. Pollen travels best on warm, dry and breezy days. Pollen counts are lowest during chilly, wet periods of weather. As released pollen travels in the air, the amount of pollen peaks in many urban areas around 10am to 3pm.

Pollen can travel very far, from 200-400 miles and up to 2 miles in the atmosphere. However, most pollen falls out close to its source.

A reliable source of pollen forecasts is often provided on your local news broadcast or at the website [www.pollen.com](http://www.pollen.com), which gives specific results based on your zip code.

**Allergy Alert** is an app available for smart phones that gives access to local pollen information. Individuals allergic to different types of pollen will develop allergy symptoms during that particular pollinating time of year. Symptoms may include eye itching, puffiness, redness, a runny or stuffy nose, itchy nose, sneezing, cough or wheezing.

**Environmental control** is a method of trying to reduce pollen exposure and minimize symptoms. We suggest:

1. Keep windows closed in the home at all times, especially the bedroom. If possible, install central air conditioning throughout the house. Keep doors closed.
2. Do not hang clothes, bed linens or towels outdoors as they become contaminated with pollen.
3. Rinse your hair each evening before bedtime. Hair becomes contaminated with pollen when outdoors.
4. Pets carry lots of pollen on their coats after being outdoors. Rinse them off, if possible.
5. Avoid mowing grass during the grass pollinating season.
6. Pollen counts peak during the late morning and mid-afternoon. Avoid outdoor activities at these times. Pollen counts will also be high on dry windy days.
7. Don't open your car windows during the pollen season and use the air conditioning if possible.