

THE ALLERGY & ASTHMA CLINIC

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NEWSLETTER

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New Research Suggests Link Between Climate Change And Outdoor Allergies

An Excerpt from the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology Spring 2010 Newsletter

The environment is an ongoing concern in today's world but "Going Green" is becoming even more of a factor for people with respiratory and allergic diseases such as allergic rhinitis or hay fever and asthma. Pollen counts, how long the season lasts and prevalence of sensitizations (how commonly people developed allergies) for five types of pollen in Italy were recorded from 1981 to 2007 by the Allergy and Respiratory Diseases Clinic at Genoa University in Genoa, Italy. Over time, there was a progressive increase in the duration of some pollen seasons. Additionally, the total pollen load was progressively increased for a number of species.

"Climate changes are a reality, and they can be documented if long enough periods of time are considered," according to Renato Ariano, MD, lead author of the study. "By studying a well-defined geographical region we observed that the progressive increase of the average temperature has prolonged the duration of the pollen seasons of some plants and, consequently, the overall pollen load," added World Allergy Organization Past President G. Walter Canonica, MD.

Results showed that the percentage of patients sensitized to these allergens increased throughout the years of the study. And although not conclusively proven, many researchers believe the longer pollen seasons actually put more people at risk for developing allergies. "Longer pollen seasons and high levels of pollen certainly can exacerbate symptoms for people with allergic rhinitis and for those who previously had minimal symptoms. This may cause more people to seek medical attention," explained Professor Estelle Levetin, member of the National Allergy Bureau Task Force of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI). The National Allergy Bureau (NAB) provides the most

accurate and reliable pollen and mold levels from approximately 78 counting stations throughout the United States. The stations use air sampling equipment to collect airborne pollen and spores which are then examined microscopically. This information is also used for research to aid in the diagnosis, treatment and management of allergic diseases.

If you suffer through pollen seasons, or wonder if your symptoms could be due to allergies, updated allergy testing can help pinpoint the cause of your problem and enable us to tailor your treatment to the specific triggers which are bringing on your allergy and asthma symptoms.

Helpful Strategies for Outdoor Allergy Sufferers

This beautiful time of year encourages all of us to spend more time outside. Follow these tips to help make gardening and other outdoor activities more enjoyable. Remember that the time of day and the weather can influence pollen counts as well as your symptoms. For some people, outdoor allergy symptoms are worse in the morning; whereas for others the afternoon and evening hours can be worse. Windy, dry, sunny and clear days may have greater pollen counts, rainy, cloudy and windless days often have lower pollen counts. In addition to checking the weather and the pollen counts, we suggest the following:

- Wear a pollen mask and/or goggles while gardening or mowing the lawn
- Avoid touching your eyes and nose when outside
- Wear gloves while working outside to minimize contact with allergens and reduce skin irritation
- Limit gardening to short intervals on high pollen days
- Keep grass cut short
- Avoid poison ivy/sumac/oak and consider barrier skin creams to prevent reactions
- If you are allergic to mold spores, avoid stagnant water
- Keep soil moist to reduce the

amount of molds and dust that become airborne

- Avoid straw mulching
- Keep your garden free of flowering weeds
- Keep high pollen-producing plants away from doors and bedroom windows
- Keep pets away from plants or trees so they do not make contact with pollens that may adhere to their fur
- After yard work, leave your clothing outside of your bedroom and remove your shoes before entering the home, rinse off your glasses
- Shower after spending time outdoors and make sure to rinse pollen out of your hair before you go to bed
- Remember to take your allergy medications on a regular basis, especially before engaging in activities which typically cause your symptoms to flare
- Keep your immunotherapy treatment regimen current; if you have gotten behind, contact our office so we can get you back on track

Office Policy Reminders

Beginning May 1, 2010 all patients receiving allergy injections outside of our office must include the date each allergy injection was taken when ordering future kits. For your convenience, a shot injection log is included in each kit.

All patients that are scheduled for an office visit and allergy shot on the same day are reminded that allergy shots are not given until after the completion of the office visit.

Many of our patients are very sensitive to perfumes so we kindly ask that perfume is not worn at any time to our office.

Office Closed Monday, July 5

In observance of Independence Day, our office will be closed, Monday, July 5. Our office will be open Saturday, July 3 from 9AM to noon for allergy shots only and will be open for our regular business hours from 9 AM until 7 pm on Tuesday, July 6.

