

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

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Climate change linked to longer allergy season in Bay Area, Stanford study finds

According to a recent study conducted by Stanford University, pollen and mold spores in the Bay Area are elevated for about an additional 2 months as compared to previous years. It was concluded that changes in temperatures and rainfall are responsible for the prolonged allergy season, which is not what allergy sufferers want to hear.

This study found that increases in temperature prolonged tree and grass pollen seasons, and rainfall, produced more mold spores in the air. In fact, “tree pollen and mold seasons each grew by about half a week per year from 2002 through 2019”. Climate change is really a problem for health, and we are living and breathing the effects of climate change now,” said the study’s senior author, [Kari Nadeau](#), MD, PhD, professor of medicine and of pediatrics at [Stanford School of Medicine](#). As many allergists have noticed, pollen season seems to be starting sooner and lasting for a much longer period of time. Patients have also noticed this trend and in some cases, their symptoms are more severe and often require more medications to manage their symptoms. According to Dr. Nadeau, allergy sufferers and their doctors should “adjust allergy treatment accordingly” and because people with allergies are “vulnerable to secondary bacterial infections, such as sinus infections, ear infections and pneumonia, patients should follow local pollen counts and not just assume their allergies will start at the same time every year.”

Complicating the above findings, is the potential effects of the upcoming wild-fire season. There have been numerous wild-fires in the Northern counties and with our relatively dry winter, there will be more

inevitable fires. For those with allergic and asthmatic conditions, the upcoming few months may be challenging, but by being proactive, we can help you minimize the effects of the extended allergy season, as well as the sure-to-come wildfires.

- **Check local air quality reports.** Listen and watch for news or health warnings about smoke. Find out if your community provides reports about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Air Quality Index (AQI). In addition, pay attention to public health messages.
- **Keep indoor air as clean as possible.** On days with poor air quality or high pollen counts, keep windows and doors closed. If you have one, run an air conditioner, but keep the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside. Run an air purifier in your bedroom 24/7 and make sure that the filters are also kept clean.
- **Avoid activities that increase indoor pollution.** Burning candles, using air fresheners, fireplaces, or gas stoves can increase indoor pollution. Vacuuming stirs up particles already inside your home, contributing to indoor pollution. Smoking also puts even more pollution into the air.
- **Medications:** Make sure that you are taking all your allergy and asthma medications as prescribed and if you are on them, get your allergy shots or drops as scheduled.

We are here to help you with your allergy needs!