

# The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

[www.TheAllergyClinic.com](http://www.TheAllergyClinic.com)

Andrew C. Engler, M.D.

290 Baldwin Avenue, San Mateo, California 94401

(650) 343-4597 FAX (650) 343-3402

Newsletter

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## POLLEN COUNTS ARE ON THE RISE

According to the National Weather Service, this year's rainy season was considered the 9th wettest year. In addition, it was the most rain we have had since 1994. However, with this much needed rain, it is predicted that we are going to have very high pollen counts this spring. In fact, pollen.com has already detected significant levels of tree pollen in the air.

In the United States alone, more than 50 million Americans suffer from allergies, and allergic conditions rank 6<sup>th</sup> among the leading chronic diseases in the United States. It is estimated that the annual cost of allergies to the health care system and businesses is about \$18 billion dollars. This cost, including the loss of productivity, puts a severe strain not only on our work force, but also our entire health care system, especially during this COVID 19 pandemic. To make things worse, there is often an overlap between allergic symptoms and those often associated with respiratory illnesses.

## WHAT IS POLLEN?

Pollen is a fine powder produced by certain plants. During the spring, summer and the fall, pollen is released into the air and picked up by the wind. The wind carries it to other plants so they can make seeds. Pollen is produced by most plants as part of their reproduction process.

Pollen can blow for miles, especially during the months of February through June/July. However, there are steps you can take to minimize the effects of pollen.

- After spending time outside, make it a habit to keep pollen-laden clothes and shoes out of the bedroom. It is also a good idea to shower and rinse pollen out of your hair, before you go to bed at night.
- Keeping windows open allows us to get fresh air in the house, but doing so may also bring more pollen into the home. It is best not to open windows in the

- home, especially in the bedroom when pollen counts are at their highest or when it is windy. There are a couple of allergy suppliers who sell "pollen screens" and although they may not be the most attractive, they do trap pollen, allowing us to still enjoy fresh air.
- Whenever possible, refrain from going outside on windy days. The best time to go outside is after a good rain, as rain can help to clear pollen from the air.
- Mowing the lawn, pulling weeds and other gardening tasks can stir up pollen and mold. Make sure you wear a mask and shower after these chores. Make sure that you keep the clothes you wore during these activities out of the bedroom. Avoid touching your face when working in the garden or yard. When done, leave your gardening gloves and tools outside.
- If you have an air conditioner, run it. Avoid using window fans, as they have the potential to bring pollen into the home.
- Avoid planning outdoor activities early in the morning, as pollen counts are usually at their highest in the morning. Don't hang clothes or sheets outside to dry. Use a dryer instead.

Allergy skin testing can help to diagnose an allergy to pollen and although avoidance is key, it is not always possible. Keep up with environmental control measures in the home and take medications as prescribed. For many, allergy immunotherapy has been effective in managing pollen allergies and if you think you would benefit from this treatment, or have questions about how immunotherapy works, let us know. We are here to help you feel better.

**Please note: In observance of Presidents' Day, we will be closed on Monday, February 21, 2022**