

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

www.TheAllergyClinic.com

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Newsletter

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TREE POLLEN ALLERGY



Tree pollen is the first pollen to appear each year in the United States. Although tree pollen counts are still currently low, by the end of February tree pollen counts are sure to be higher. Tree pollen tends to be light-weight and is therefore readily carried by the wind. As a result, pollen can enter our eyes, nasal passages and respiratory tract quite easily. This pollen exposure can then cause a myriad of allergy symptoms, including itching and watering of the eyes, nasal congestion, runny nose, sneezing and even a cough. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, the following are a number of the trees known to cause the most allergies.

- Alder, Ash, Birch, Box Elder, Cedar, Cottonwood, Cypress, Elm, Eucalyptus, Juniper, Maple, Mulberry, Oak, Olive, Poplar and Walnut

Are Tree Pollen Counts on the Rise?

Although there are several possibilities as to why pollen counts are on the rise, global warming is one of the major reasons. Global warming has caused trees to release pollen for longer periods of time and the concentration of the pollen is also higher. Climate change is also causing increased carbon dioxide gas in the air, which can stimulate trees to make more pollen.

Many trees spread pollen in the morning, and some trees spread a larger amount of pollen as compared to others. For example, male trees usually produce more pollen, while female trees produce the fruit. If you plan to do any landscaping using trees, keep this in mind. There is even such a thing as “sterile trees”! However, even if you are selective about your choices, pollen can blow for miles.

Treatment Options

- Keep track of pollen counts in your area and plan your outdoor activities accordingly.
- If you are staying indoors, run the air conditioner if you have one.
- Avoid bringing pollen into your home by keeping the windows closed and keeping pollen-laden clothing and shoes out of the bedroom.
- Wear a hat or other head covering when you are outdoors for prolonged periods of time.
- Take showers before bedtime if you have been outside during the day.
- If you have pets, wipe them down with a wet cloth before they come into the house. Ideally, pets should be bathed regularly during the pollen season and they should be kept out of the bedroom.
- Take your allergy medications as prescribed. Keep in mind, there are some medications which may take a week or two before maximum benefits are noted.
- If you are on allergy shots or allergy drops, make sure that you are getting them as scheduled.

In observance of President's Day, the San Mateo office will be closed on Monday, February 19, 2024.