

Achooo Newsletter



NORTH TEXAS ALLERGY AND ASTHMA ASSOCIATES

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Ragweed Tumbles In



For many, August signals the end of summer. But for millions of Americans, the month marks the beginning of ragweed season – and with it another battle against sneezing, itchy eyes, runny noses and congestion. Ragweed is abundant in the Northeast, Midwest and South from mid-August through the first frost, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI). The weed grows in fields and roadside ditches, but also thrives in urban areas such as vacant lots. Allergy shots are an effective treatment in up to 90 percent of patients.

Oral allergy syndrome

Many individuals with ragweed allergy also have symptoms when eating certain fresh fruits and vegetables. Oral allergy syndrome (OAS) can also cause itchiness and mild swelling around the mouth. OAS occurs when the body confuses the proteins in these foods with similar ones in ragweed. Common foods that trigger OAS in people with ragweed allergy include bananas, cucumbers, zucchinis, melons, chamomile, sunflower seeds and Echinacea.

Avoid exposure

The AAAAI estimates that 36 million Americans suffer from seasonal allergies. Ragweed is the No. 1 cause of fall allergies.

We can diagnose and treat ragweed and other allergies, enhancing the quality-of-life for those who suffer.

DID YOU KNOW?

Each ragweed plant produces 1 billion pollen grains in an average season. With help from the wind, the grains can travel up to 400 miles.

The AAAAI offers these tips for minimizing exposure to ragweed:

- Keep windows closed to keep pollen from drifting into your home. Use the air conditioner, which filters, cools and dries the air.
- Stay indoors when pollen counts are highest, typically between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Check daily pollen counts for your area at www.aaaai.org/nab and at www.texasallergyonline.com
- Change your clothing after time spent outdoors and avoid drying laundry outside.
- Sleep well by taking a shower before bed to wash away pollen that's accumulated on or near your head – and will otherwise windup on your pillow.

Ask Dr. Gupta or Dr. Galicia for additional information on ragweed allergy and oral allergy syndrome.

Office News:

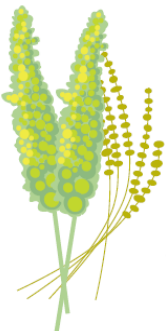
- Extended Plano Hours: We are now open Mondays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays at our Plano location.
- Allergy shot patients: Please check-in at the front desk upon arrival.
- We expect to have the seasonal flu vaccine available in October—will let you know as soon as it arrives.
- We have registered to receive the H1N1 flu vaccine when available.
- Make sure to check out the curio and its contents in the waiting area!
- Our doctors recently participated in local news stories on the WB33. Make sure to check them out online.
- The way to contact the doctor after business hours has changed. Now you can call 214-246-0253 and leave a detailed message. The doctor will call you back.

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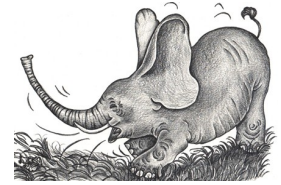


To the Point

- Ragweed is common in most regions of the United States and is the primary cause of fall allergy symptoms.
- Many individuals with ragweed allergy also experience symptoms while eating certain fresh fruits and vegetables. Common triggers include bananas, cucumber and melon.
- Avoid ragweed exposure by keeping car and home windows closed and staying indoors during high pollen counts.
- Visit the National Allergy Bureau (NAB) at www.aaaai.org/nab or our website (we provide a link) for daily pollen counts.



Providing personalized care since 1927



NORTH TEXAS ALLERGY AND ASTHMA ASSOCIATES

We're on the web!
www.texasallergyonline.com

Our staff excels at providing you and your family with personalized and excellent health care. Our emphasis involves intertwining education, medication, and proven medical modalities. We specialize in the treatment of nasal allergies, asthma, eye allergy, sinus disease, and allergic skin disorders. Our office performs the following procedures: allergy skin testing, allergy RAST testing, spirometry (pre and post bronchodilator), ear irrigation, and patch testing.

Flu Vaccine

It's always important for people with asthma to get their yearly flu shot. But this year, it is even more critical, and it involves more than one shot. Public health officials are concerned that the H1N1 flu virus (sometimes called "swine flu"), which first emerged last spring, could infect even more people in the United States during this year's winter flu season.

Flu viruses infect a person's upper respiratory tract. As a result, people with respiratory problems-including asthma-are more likely to experience serious health problems if they get the flu. For example, if you have asthma and get the flu, you may be more likely to have an asthma attack. Children and young adults, pregnant women and people with other underlying health conditions also need to be vigilant when it comes to the new flu strain.

The CDC is working to ensure that adequate supplies of an H1N1 flu vaccine are available before the flu season hits in the United States. Once the vaccine is available, people with asthma should get vaccinated.

This new vaccine will not protect against the seasonal flu, so you may need to receive two vaccinations to stay healthy. The CDC recommends that all children receive the seasonal flu vaccine. The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to those of the seasonal flu. If you experience any of these symptoms, contact your doctor:

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Lack of appetite
- Coughing

Some people infected with the H1N1 flu virus may also have a runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Catching symptoms of the flu early is important, because antiviral drugs are most effective when taken within 48 hours of infection. Getting vaccinated and taking basic preventive steps (such as washing your hands and covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze) are the best ways to avoid getting the flu.

Obtained from the AAAAI Web site at www.aaaai.org



DID YOU KNOW?

- Studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that only one-third of adults with asthma receive the flu vaccine every year.
- Men and African Americans are less likely to receive a flu vaccine than women and whites, according to the CDC.
- Adults older than 65 may have natural antibodies to H1N1 because of exposure to older flu strains. However, older adults, particularly those with asthma, should still get vaccinated against the seasonal flu and take steps to avoid infection.
- The greatest number of H1N1 flu cases have occurred in children and adults under the age of 24.

Obtained from the AAAAI Web site at www.aaaai.org