

## May: Allergy Relief Tips Wherever You Go



Checklist for Seasonal Allergy Sufferers WebMD Medical Reference

Reviewed By Brunilda Nazario, MD

In the spring and fall, tree, grass, and weed pollens become airborne and can result in sneezing, a runny nose, and itchiness in your nose, throat, and eyes. Doctors call it seasonal allergic rhinitis or allergic conjunctivitis (when it affects the eyes) but most of us just call it hay fever.

Even when the pollen count is high and the breezes are stiff, it's possible to take steps to reduce symptoms of your seasonal allergies.

Here are nine simple steps to keep your hay fever symptoms at bay.

### **1. Wear natural fabrics.**

When you pick natural fabrics such as cotton, you'll attract less pollen, some experts say. Silks and synthetic fabrics tend to build up static electricity, which attracts pollen.

### **2. Wash your hair before bed.**

If you're a morning shampoo person, consider switching to shampooing and showering before bed instead. That way pollen that collected on your hair during the day won't rub off on your pillow.

### **3. Close up the house.**

Open windows can be refreshing, but they let in pollen.

Close windows and outside doors, especially on high-pollen days, and turn on the heat or the air-conditioning.

### **4. Use the "recirculate" option in the car.**

Keep windows and sunroofs closed. Especially on high-pollen days, recirculate the air in your car instead of using the vent, which may let in pollen. Use the air conditioner and adjust the temperature to your comfort.

### **5. Service the filters in your furnace and air conditioner.**

Change them at the intervals recommended by the manufacturer, or more frequently if it seems to help.

### **6. Adjust your indoor humidity level.**

If spores from mold cause your allergies, aim for a humidity level of less than 50%. Consider buying a digital thermometer with a humidity gauge, available for about \$40 or

less.

You may need a dehumidifier to get a level lower than 50%.

Set up the dehumidifier on the main living level of the house, if your house has more than one story.

### **7. Check the pollen count and plan your day accordingly.**

The web site of the American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology offers a daily pollen count by zip code, e-mailed to you. Or use the Pollen Widget, found [here](#).

If the predicted pollen count is high, try to plan your schedule accordingly. Delay errands and exercise, if possible, until later in the day, when pollen counts are typically lower. Take your allergy medications with you. Wear sunglasses, which can help keep pollen out of your eyes.

Pollen counts are usually highest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Weather conditions also play a role in pollen levels. Pollen sticks around in moderate temperatures with low humidity and a gentle breeze. Rain washes pollen away.

Pollen is carried by the wind, so a still day will typically have lower pollen levels.

### **8. Control your immediate environment.**

If you know the exact tree, grass, and weed pollens that affect you, you can try to remove them and replant more tolerable types. But remember that airborne pollens can travel hundreds of miles from where they originated.

If you can get someone else to mow the lawn or hire it out, do so. It stirs up pollens. Avoid sitting outdoors around freshly cut grass.

### **9. Dry your clothes in a clothes dryer, not on an outdoor line.**

Pollen can collect easily on clothing or bed linens left outside.

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Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD on December 17, 2010

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