



Pollen Attack – How to Minimize Seasonal Allergies

Whether it's the long-awaited change of winter into spring, or the quiet fading of summer into fall, for many folks the changing of the seasons means more than just vacation plans and a new wardrobe -- it signals the start of seasonal allergies.

Sneezing, wheezing, runny nose, and itchy, watery, red eyes -- these are just some of the symptoms that more than 35 million Americans face each year as the pollen from trees, grass, flowers, and plants makes it way into the air.

The American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) recommends these smart strategies to help beat spring allergies.

- 1. Wear glasses or sunglasses when outdoors.** Covering your eyes keeps pollen and other irritants away from this sensitive area, which reduces itchiness and redness.
- 2. Shower and wash your hair before bed.** Cleaning up before getting into bed helps remove pollen from your hair and skin, which reduces irritation. You should also consider keeping pets out of the bedroom if they've been outside, as pollen can cling to their fur.
- 3. Minimize activities outdoors when pollen counts are at their peak.** Pollen is typically at its highest point during midday and afternoon hours, so those who suffer with allergies and asthma should avoid going outside during those times of day.

Check out <http://www.pollen.com/allergy-weather-forecast.asp> for your local forecast.

- 4. Run the air conditioner at home.** Leaving doors and windows open is a good way to invite allergens and other irritants inside your home, so there's no escape.
- 5. Keep air conditioning and furnace filters fresh.** It's important to change filters every three months and use filters with a MERV rating of 8 to 12. A MERV rating tells you how well the filter can remove pollen and mold from the air as it passes through.