



Pollen Avoidance Strategies

What is pollen?

Pollen is the powdery, yellowish grain derived from seed plants that develops into the male reproductive cell. Types of pollen include:

- Grass
- Alder tree
- Hazel
- Birch trees
- Ragweed

Why should we be concerned about pollen?

Pollen is a major allergic trigger that can make asthma symptoms worse by increasing inflammation in the airways, making them more sensitive. Research has linked weather events that stir up pollen amounts in the air (like thunderstorms) to asthma epidemics and increased numbers of visits to hospital emergency rooms. Find out if you are allergic to pollen by talking to your doctor about getting an allergy assessment done. If you test positive for pollen the following information is important to your health.

What factors affect the amount of pollen in the air?

High humidity, moisture and barometric pressure cause pollen to rupture into very small grains that are easily inhaled, which can lead to reactions in allergic individuals. Winds then can carry and distribute airborne pollen.

Tips to reduce pollen exposure:

It is often difficult to avoid pollen exposure. However, one can effectively reduce exposure and manage the symptoms. Once you know what you are allergic to, you can take steps to reduce your exposure when pollen counts are high.

When pollen counts are high:

- Plan outdoor activity after 10 a.m., when pollen counts are lower.
- Consider exercising indoors or later in the day.
- Keep car and house windows closed.
- Use air conditioning in your car and home.
- Change and wash clothing after being outdoors.
- Monitor your asthma symptoms closely during pollen season.



Talk to your doctor about:

- Having a written Asthma Action Plan so you know what to do if your asthma symptoms get worse.
- Whether allergy shots are right for you.
- Whether antihistamines and nasal corticosteroids are necessary.

For More Information

Contact the Asthma Society of Canada at 1-866-787-4050 or visit www.Asthma.ca.