

MICHIGAN PHYSICIANS GROUP

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Ready for Ragweed Allergy Season?



It's ragweed season, and for people with this pollen allergy, that means miserable symptoms such as sneezing, a runny or stuffy nose, trouble sleeping, asthma attacks, and itchy skin, eyes, nose, or throat. The season usually kicks into high gear **about August 15.**

Most regions in the United States experience ragweed growth between mid-August and the first frost. Each ragweed plant makes about a billion pollen grains per season—and with the help of the wind, those grains can travel up to 400 miles, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, or AAAAI. Also, some people with ragweed allergy experience itching and swelling around the mouth as a result of eating some common fresh fruits and vegetables. The condition is called oral allergy syndrome and is commonly prompted by eating bananas, cucumbers, melons, and zucchini.

Though the season is just getting started, some experts believe that climate changes associated with global warming may be lengthening the annual ragweed allergy season. **That's bad news for the 10 to 20 percent** of

Americans allergic to these weeds, which studies suggest will flourish for longer each year, thanks to rising temperatures and carbon dioxide levels.

Keep windows closed at home and in the car. It may feel good to catch a breeze from outside, but the pollen you're allowing to enter your home or car can make your allergy symptoms worse. **Call your doctor now for an appointment if you're out of prescription medication refills. "**

Bathe your pets frequently. Even if you're not allergic to your dog or cat, it is probably a good idea to bathe the animal more frequently during ragweed season because it can track pollen into the house.

Shower before bed so that you're not introducing pollen from outside into your bed at night

Consider allergy shots, also known as immunotherapy, which can be effective for up to 90 percent of patients who are allergic to ragweed, according to the AAAAI. Allergy immunotherapy is typically covered by health insurance.

Talk to your Doctor!