

Pollen triggers my asthma and allergies

Many people are allergic to windborne pollen from grasses, weeds and trees. This pollen can blow into your nose and eyes, triggering asthma and allergies.



High allergen plants

Problem pollen usually comes from imported grasses, weeds and trees, which are wind pollinated.

Australian native plants are usually not the culprit, although there are exceptions, such as cypress pine.

Allergies are not usually triggered by highly flowered plants as they produce less pollen (which is transported by bees) than wind pollinated plants.

Thunderstorm asthma

‘Thunderstorm asthma’ is a potent mix of pollens, weather conditions and rain that can trigger severe asthma symptoms.

When rain droplets crash into airborne pollen, the pollen grains are broken into tiny particles. These particles can then get further and deeper inside your lungs than the larger pollen grains, and so trigger a worse asthma response.

© 2019 National Asthma Council Australia

Disclaimer: It is important to note that information contained in this fact sheet is not intended to replace professional medical advice. Any questions regarding a medical diagnosis or treatment should be directed to a medical practitioner.

Avoiding pollen

Completely avoiding pollen can be difficult during the pollen season but the following steps may help reduce your exposure:

- Avoid going outdoors on days with high pollen counts, on windy days or after thunderstorms
- Use re-circulated air in the car when pollen levels are high
- Use your prescribed medications before going outdoors when pollen cannot be avoided, and keep your asthma reliever with you
- Shower (or wash your face and hands thoroughly) after activities where you have high exposure to pollen
- Wear a facemask in special situations where you can't avoid lots of pollen, e.g. when driving a tractor during harvest
- Consider low-allergen plants pollinated by birds or insects when landscaping your garden

Is your nose making your asthma worse?

Up to four out of five people with asthma also have allergies like hay fever – either at certain times of the year or all year round.

An itchy, runny or blocked nose due to allergies can make your asthma harder to control. If that sounds like you, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

Need more information?

Visit National Asthma Council Australia's website nationalasthma.org.au