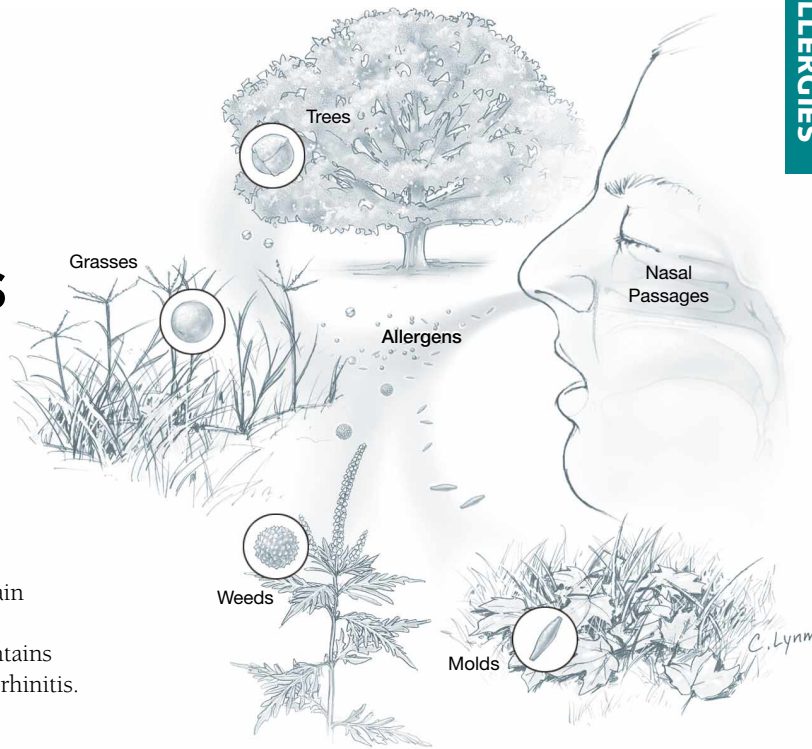


Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis

Seasonal allergic rhinitis (also known as hay fever) affects over 23 million Americans each year and is caused by allergies to specific **allergens**—airborne pollens from trees, grasses, and weeds, and spores from molds. Pollens are tiny microscopic cells of flowering plants. Pollens and molds are abundant in the air during certain times of the year.

The December 19, 2001, issue of *JAMA* contains an article about treatment for seasonal allergic rhinitis.



SYMPTOMS OF SEASONAL ALLERGIC RHINITIS

- Runny nose; congestion; sneezing
- Itching of the eyes, throat, nose, or roof of the mouth
- Watering or redness of the eyes

TREATMENT

There is no cure for seasonal allergic rhinitis. However, a number of medications, including antihistamines, intranasal corticosteroids, and decongestants are available to control symptoms. **Immunotherapy** consists of a series of allergy shots that help prevent or decrease allergic reactions. Immunotherapy may be prescribed by an allergist, a doctor who specializes in treating allergies.

PREVENTION

The best way to treat seasonal allergic rhinitis is to prevent attacks by reducing exposure to allergens. There are several ways to reduce exposure:

- Keep windows and doors closed and air conditioning on at home and in the car during allergy season. Avoid using attic and window fans that draw in outside air.
- Run a dehumidifier to keep humidity low.
- Stay indoors when possible and minimize outdoor activity during peak pollen periods.
- Avoid mowing the lawn and raking leaves, and avoid contact with freshly cut grass.
- Shower or bathe and change clothing after outdoor activities.
- Dry clothes in a vented dryer; do not hang clothes outside to dry.

Sources: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Online (American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology) www.allergy.mcg.edu
- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology 800/822-2762 www.aaaai.org
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases 301/496-5717 www.niaid.nih.gov
- Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America 202/466-7643 www.aafa.org

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Lise M. Stevens, MA, Writer

Cassio Lynn, MA, Illustrator

Richard M. Glass, MD, Editor

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