

Please note that these measures may not be enough to prevent your child from experiencing allergy symptoms.

Be sure to always carry your child's asthma and allergy medication.

Take the time to talk to your child about his or her allergies, and how they impact asthma. Explain their cause and effect relationship so that your child better understands what you do to protect him or her. For example, when your child is having more difficulty breathing during ragweed season in August, ask what he or she believes may be the reason.



For more information, please call:

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Printing : Imprimerie du CHU Sainte-Justine

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F-870 A GRM 40001126 (rév. 08-2011)



This brochure will provide you with information about allergies and helpful tips for improving your child's health.

Allergies are the immune system's inappropriate and disproportionate response to one or many allergy-causing substances, better known as allergens.

Allergic reactions can occur in different ways:

- Allergic rhinitis (congestion, itchy and watery nose);
- Conjunctivitis (irritated, watery and itchy eyes);
- Skin reactions (rashes, puffiness, itchiness);
- Respiratory symptoms (coughing, difficulty breathing).

Identifying and avoiding allergens are recommended as a first step before starting or increasing any allergy medication. This is the basic approach to treating asthma and allergies.

If your child already suffers from one allergy, he or she is at risk of developing others. It is therefore preferable to take a preventive approach **as early as possible** to delay the onset of any new allergies. Be also mindful of cumulative situations. For example, asthma will be more difficult to control if your child is exposed to **cigarette smoke**; has a **cold**; and is allergic to **ragweed**.



POLLEN

Seasonal allergies affect about three in ten people in Quebec. Allergic rhinitis and hay fever are caused by pollens that spread by the wind. Unfortunately, airborne pollens cannot be controlled as they can disseminate as far as several kilometers from their point of origin, thus making them difficult to avoid.

Depending on the temperature and the environment, your child's allergy symptoms will vary from year to year. Generally, a cold and rainy spring will bring a short pollen season with low pollen levels. During pollen season, you can keep track of pollen levels in the air by consulting weather channels, local newspapers and related web sites.

When trees are budding in the spring, people may experience symptoms due to pollination. In Quebec, there are a number of trees that are key allergen sources. These include:

- Birch
- Poplar
- Maple
- Elm
- Oak
- Alder

Please note that wood furniture does not trigger allergies.



Allergies that occur from May to July are commonly due to weed pollen. **There are more than 1000 plants that release weed pollen, including grass.**

Allergies that occur from early August to the first frost are more commonly due to ragweed. Artemisia is another type of inhaled allergen that can cause allergic reactions from early July to the first frost.

There are other allergy-causing pollens that can be found during this period, such as plantain, cocklebur, etc.

Here are some tips for preventing or decreasing allergy symptoms related to pollen:

- Avoid hanging laundry to dry outside, particularly during the time of year when pollen levels are high.
- Prevent your child from playing on a freshly mowed lawn, rolling around in grass or playing in stacks of hay.
- Do not encourage anyone with allergies to do outdoor maintenance (mowing, weeding, etc.).
- Make sure your child avoids climbing trees during the pollination season.
- Uproot weeds before they flower.
- If possible, keep your child's bedroom windows closed during pollen season. If you have air conditioners in your home and car, turn them on. Make sure to regularly clean the units (filters) as directed by the manufacturer.
- Limit your child's exposure to the outdoors by opting for indoor activities, particularly when pollen levels are high.
- Make sure your child avoids touching any plants as they contain mold particles and release pollen.
- Shower or bathe your child and wash his or her hair after playing outside.

Teach your child to recognize the plants to which he or she is allergic.

