

# Patient Update

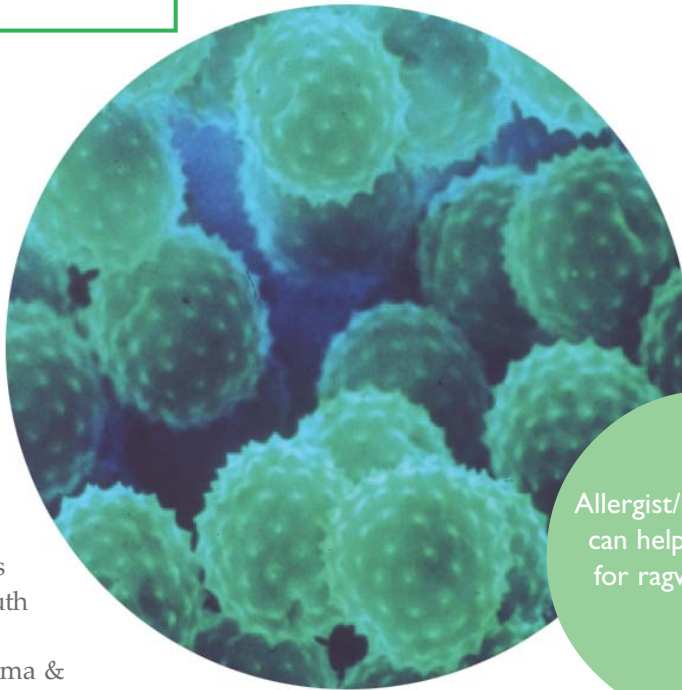
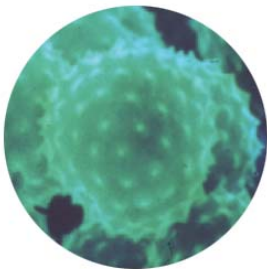
## Ragweed alert— unofficial start of season

August marks the unofficial start of ragweed season. This means that for the country's 36 million seasonal allergy sufferers more sneezing and wheezing are on the way.

Ragweed is a plant that produces one billion pollen grains per average season. These grains can travel up to 400 miles due to their lightweight texture. It commonly grows in fields, along roadsides and in vacant lots. It is most prevalent throughout the Northeast, South and Midwest from mid-August to October.

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) recommends the following tips for allergy sufferers to help reduce their exposure to ragweed:

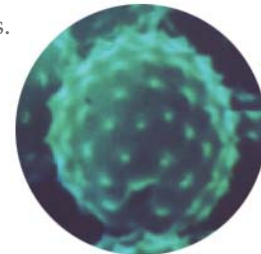
- Keep windows closed at all times during ragweed season to prevent pollen from drifting into your home. Use air conditioning, which cleans, cools and dries the air.
- Minimize outdoor activity when pollen counts are high. Peak pollen times are usually between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Keep your car windows closed when traveling.
- Take a shower after spending time outside, pollen can collect on your hair and skin.
- Don't hang sheets or clothing outside to dry. Pollens can collect on them as well.
- Minimize exposure to other known allergens during ragweed season, since symptoms are the result of a cumulative effect of multiple allergens



Allergist/immunologists can help you prepare for ragweed season.

and non-allergic triggers.

- Get up-to-date pollen information for your area from the National Allergy Bureau, [www.aaaai.org/nab](http://www.aaaai.org/nab).



Once exposed to ragweed, allergy sufferers often experience sneezing, congestion, itchy, watery eyes, and itching and dripping of the nose. Symptoms of allergic rhinitis, otherwise known as "hayfever," may contribute to sleep disorders, fatigue and learning problems. In addition, people who suffer from hayfever often have asthma or sinusitis.

It is important to talk to an allergist/immunologist to know how to prevent and control exposure to ragweed. To help alleviate symptoms, your physician may prescribe medications such as:

- Antihistamines
- Decongestants
- Antihistamine-decongestant combinations
- Mast cell stabilizers

To find an allergist/immunologist in your area or the area where you will be vacationing, call the AAAAI Physician Referral and Information Line at (800) 822-2762 or visit the AAAAI Web site at [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org).

For updated pollen counts in your vacation destination, visit the National Allergy Bureau Web site, [www.aaaai.org/nab/](http://www.aaaai.org/nab/).