

CLIMATE CHANGE & HEALTH: SEASONAL ALLERGIES

GENERAL INFORMATION

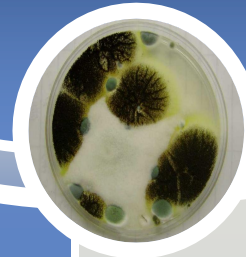
Allergic reactions occur when a person's immune system reacts to normally harmless substances in the environment. Symptoms such as red and itchy eyes, eyelid crusting, sneezing, congestion and a runny nose, coughing and irritated throat, and wheezing or an asthma attack can result from seasonal allergies or contact with mold. Allergy attacks can be triggered by things that grow, like pollen in the spring, grass in the summer and ragweed in the winter, or by mold in our homes. Mold can occur at any time and is often linked to heavy rainfall and leaky basements. Asthma attacks, particularly in children, are often triggered by allergies. Children and adults who suffer from seasonal allergies often have asthma that is harder to control.

TIPS FOR REDUCING SYMPTOMS

- Talk to your doctor about your symptoms. Your doctor may recommend an allergy test to determine your triggers
- Use air-purifiers in the home & work place
- Avoid cleaning or mowing the lawn on high symptom days
- Use prescription & over the counter medicine based on your doctor's advice
- Limit dust with protective covers & HEPA vacuums

CLIMATE CHANGE LINKED TO MORE POLLEN, ALLERGIES & ASTHMA

- Warmer temperatures, caused by climate change, can increase seasonal allergies. Spring comes earlier, making plants bloom earlier, & plants such as ragweed grow larger, worsening allergies to ragweed
- Mold levels are increasing due to climate change. More frequent & heavy rainstorms that overwhelm sewage systems & lead to flooded basements create more mold in homes
- Carbon emissions can aggravate allergy symptoms. Higher carbon dioxide levels in the environment lead to increased plant growth & more pollen in the air
- Recent studies show a direct link between polluted air/ozone & allergy problems. When ozone levels are high, more allergic symptoms require medical attention
- Diesel exhaust drives higher asthma rates in urban communities



ALLERGIES IN CHICAGO

Chicago recently ranked the sixth worst city for ragweed allergies; climate change may be making the problem worse. The Asthma rates and mold count in Chicago are also high. Low-income Chicagoans are more likely to require medical attention from allergic symptoms.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION:

LVEJO's Climate Adaptation struggle acknowledges that EJ communities such as Little Village are disproportionately impacted by the hardships caused by climate change and extreme weather incidents. We are vulnerable to displacement, sickness, death, and mis-education because of poor planning and state neglect in underserved communities like ours.