

# Ragweed, mold and more: Get ready for fall allergies

October 16 2023, by Cara Murez

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While the hot, dry summer may have offered a break to people with

some environmental allergies, that reprieve could be over.

Ragweed and mold are in the air this fall.

"This summer was good news for people who are sensitive to mold and pollen as there were little of those allergens in the air, but now that we're seeing more rain coming in after this drought, we're experiencing a big ragweed and mold bloom in Houston," said Dr. David Corry, a professor in the section of immunology, allergy and rheumatology at Baylor College of Medicine.

It's not always easy to distinguish fall allergies from seasonal viruses, Corry noted. Common allergy symptoms include sneezing, a [runny nose](#), and itchy or watery eyes. A [sore throat](#) and malaise are more typical of a virus, like the flu or a cold.

While the body may have an extreme reaction to sudden exposure to large amounts of pollen or mold, including aches and pains, this is temporary, Corry said. Tests for flu and cold can help identify what's going on.

Fall activities that may stir up allergies include hayrides at pumpkin patches, because the bales are made from grasses that many people are allergic to. Hayriders should also watch for signs of mold, such as black streaks or foul, damp odors.

"Mold spores can take hold in your [upper airway](#), causing allergy symptoms, and an infection can cause something more severe like sinusitis. If [mold spores](#) get in your lower airway, it is possible to develop asthma," Corry said in a college news release. "We see this in tropical, humid environments and see patients who begin to feel allergy symptoms to allergens they previously didn't."

Corry recommends using a nasal allergy spray and over-the-counter antihistamines. Take them twice a day if symptoms persist.

Using a distilled water saline sinus rinse with a neti pot, squeeze bottle or electronic machine may also help. Visit an allergist to get additional help for symptoms, he advised.

"Allergy shots can be helpful, but by seeing your allergist, we can check for things like nasal obstructions, [nasal polyps](#) or sleep apnea or begin immunotherapy," Corry said.

**More information:** The American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology has more on [seasonal allergies](#).

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