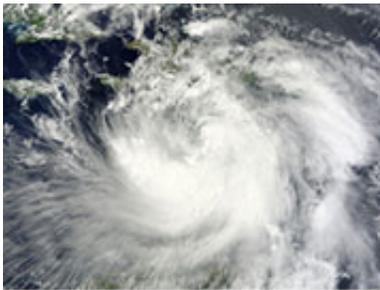


Hurricane Isaac could stir up allergies, asthma

August 29 2012



Satellite view of Isaac in the Caribbean. Photo: NASA Goddard MODIS Rapid Response Team

Experts say levels of pollen and mold typically rise after these types of storms.

(HealthDay)—Dangerous winds and flooding aren't the only hazards posed by Hurricane Isaac as it pounds Louisiana and Mississippi.

The dramatic climate changes triggered by the storm may also cause mild to life-threatening allergy and asthma symptoms, according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI).

Experts say the hurricane's heavy rains will wash away ragweed pollen currently in bloom, but once the rain clears, [pollen counts](#) can skyrocket. Cold and warm fronts, as well as winds created by the storm, can also boost levels of both pollen and mold, two major allergy triggers.

"Hurricanes and other severe storms can create drastic climate changes. This erratic weather can influence the severity of allergy and asthma symptoms for the more than 40 million Americans that suffer from these conditions," ACAAI President Dr. Stanley Fineman explained in a news release.

In previous years, allergists have noted an increase in patients' allergy and asthma symptoms during [severe storms](#). And lingering moisture and humidity after a severe storm can cause pollen and mold to last longer.

It's best to treat allergies and asthma before symptoms begin. Knowing weather-related factors that can affect your allergy and [asthma symptoms](#) can help you predict symptom flare-ups throughout the year, according to the ACAAI.

These factors include:

- Heavy rainfall, which can lead to increased pollen and mold counts and attract [West Nile virus](#)-carrying mosquitoes.
- Cool nights and warm days: Tree, grass and ragweed pollens thrive in such conditions.
- Heat and humidity provide ideal conditions for [mold spores](#) to multiply.
- Wind can stir pollen and mold into the air. They can also be stirred into the air on calm days when you mow the lawn or rake leaves.

More information: The American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology has more about [asthma](#).

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