

# Relief for Allergies in the Great Outdoors

## How can you play and work outside with allergies?

WebMD

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Excerpts from Dr. Warren Filley / Allergist

### Friendly Flora for Allergies

- Choose plants for your garden that will minimize allergen exposure such as irises, hyacinths, hibiscus, roses, and daisies. Steer clear of more highly allergenic plants like timothy grass and willow trees
- Some people may enjoy mowing the grass, but many don't -- as it kicks up an enormous amount of allergens such as grass pollen and mold. Hire help for this, if possible.
- When working in the yard, you can use an allergy relief mask designed to prevent inhaling allergens. Cheap, disposable paper versions are available everywhere from pharmacies to lawn and garden centers.

### Timing Activities for Allergies

- In addition, you may be able to select your outdoor activities based on the time of year your allergies are most active.
- "If you're sensitive to specific types of plants that have certain seasons, you're fine if you're not out as much during those seasons," says Filley. "In the spring in most parts of the U.S., there's about a month when grass is pollinating. If that's the only thing that really triggers your allergies -- or, say, ragweed in the fall -- then you may be just fine outside nine or 10 months out of the year."
- For example, if grass pollen troubles you, choose a soccer league that has an early-fall season rather than a spring-season lacrosse group.

### Allergy Apparel: What to Wear

- Whether you're gardening, playing sports, or just going for a walk outdoors, dress to repress allergies. It can be tempting on warm summer days to wear as little as possible, but if you're going to be digging up plants or kicking up grass on the soccer field, that's a recipe for sneezes.
- "Skimpy clothing means more exposure to plant material," says Filley. "Instead, wear lightweight clothing that still covers you, like long pants and long-sleeved shirts." Clothes that you've been gardening in, or playing outdoor sports in, should be thoroughly laundered after every exposure.

### After Exposure to Allergens

- You can't prevent all exposure to allergens when you're outdoors, so one of the most important things you can do to avoid allergy flare-ups is to clean up immediately after you come in.
- "Take a shower as soon as you come in, and rinse your nasal passages thoroughly with a nasal rinse bottle," advises Filley. He also suggests using a neti pot for relieving nasal irritation.
- Simply fill the neti pot with a warm water-and-saline solution (about ¼ teaspoon non-iodized salt to eight ounces water). Tilt your head to one side and insert the spout of the neti pot into the raised nostril. Breathe through your mouth as you allow saline to flow in the upper nostril and out the lower nostril.

"It's not practical to cloister yourself in a bubble," says Filley. "Using common-sense approaches, people with allergies can still enjoy the outdoors."