

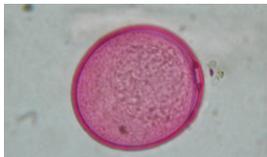
Pollen in the Willamette Valley

Posted on May 24, Posted by [Kraig W. Jacobson, M.D.](#) Category [Allergy](#)



Have you ever been outside on a bright sunny day and watched the wind blow the cottonwood seeds across the path? About that time, you start to sneeze and notice that your eyes are watery and itchy and your nose is congested.

A reasonable assumption would be that the cottonwood seed is causing the symptoms because you can visibly see it. However, for most people here in the Willamette Valley, it is the grass pollen in the air that is the real culprit.



Grass pollen can be a problem for many May through July.

What is pollen?

Pollens are the tiny male sexual spores of flowering plants that have the ability to penetrate membranes, such as those in your eyes and nose. These microscopic granules may be necessary for plant fertilization but cause a lot of human misery. It would take one million pollen grains laid next to one another to cover an average postage stamp.

What are peak times for pollen?

Although there are trace amounts of pollen at almost any time of year, the peak times for pollen here in Eugene are late winter to mid-summer. Tree pollen season generally begins with the hazelnut (filbert), often arriving in January. By the week of spring break we start to see Alder and Birch pollinate and other trees continue to pollinate through the month of May. By May, the grass pollens have started to dominate and continue until mid-July.

Among the many types of pollen, grass pollen rules supreme in Eugene. There is even a sign on the freeway as you enter neighboring Linn County that proclaims itself as the grass seed capital of the world!

Tips on controlling pollen intake

- Avoid the outdoors from 5-10 a.m., as pollen counts are generally higher during this time.
- Dry clothing in a clothes dryer rather than outside on a clothes line.
- Keep car windows up while driving.
- Avoid side-discharging lawn mowers used without a bag.

Pollen counting

Check back soon, as we further discuss aspects of pollen, pollen counting and what it all means for you. In the meantime, please review the [Eugene pollen counts](#) to stay up to date.

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