

## Survive Ragweed Season with Simple Steps

Find relief from the sneezing, stuffy nose and watery eyes brought on by ragweed this year by following these survival tips from Allergy & Asthma Care Center and the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI):

- Beat symptoms to the punch:** Get a jump start on ragweed allergy symptoms by taking allergy medications in advance, beginning the first or second week in August.
- Beware of other allergies that increase suffering:** If you're allergic to dogs, cats or dust mites you may be even *more* susceptible to ragweed allergy. New research suggests these allergies "prime" the system, making hay fever suffering even worse. The solution? Get treated for allergies year-round, which will make hay fever easier to tolerate.
- Avoid peak exposure time:** To reduce exposure during peak pollen levels, avoid scheduling outdoor activities between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m. when ragweed pollen counts are highest.
- Sidestep yard work:** Hay fever sufferers should avoid mowing the lawn and raking leaves, two activities that stir up pollen. If you must mow or rake, or are doing other outside activities, such as gardening, wear a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-approved N95 respirator mask.
- Grab some shade(s):** Use style to your allergy advantage. Wear glasses or sunglasses that fit close to your face to keep pollen from irritating your eyes.
- Steer clear of irritants:** Reduce your exposure to air pollutants, such as cigarette smoke, insecticides, fertilizers, gasoline fumes, fresh paint and tar, which can worsen your symptoms. Replace your furnace filter with a high efficiency filter (MERV 11 or 12) and change it every three months at the start of each season.

Those who suspect they have hay fever or other allergies should get tested by an allergist – a doctor who is expert in diagnosing and treating allergies and asthma.

To learn more about allergies and asthma or take a free relief self-test, visit [www.AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org](http://www.AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org).