

Allergy season could be a doozy in Tahoe



Each year pollen collects everywhere in Tahoe, including on the lake. Photo/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

It's coming, and may arrive with a vengeance. We're talking about allergy season.

"The wet weather will bring a lot more vigorous plant growth, which means more pollen and more allergies," Ronald Roth, otolaryngologist at Barton Ear, Nose & Throat, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The one good thing about all the snow is that it could delay the onset of allergies. And if it snows early in the fall, it could be a really short season.

As soon as the snow melts those in the Tahoe-Truckee areas can expect allergies to kick in. They already are in lower locales like Carson City, Reno and the foothills. While those places

have some similar triggers that are found in the basin, they also have olive trees, eucalyptus, and grasses.

“A general rule of thumb for the start of allergy season is when it stops snowing in May or June or when flowers start to bloom. I like to say when you start to see your lawn, allergy season is starting to ramp up,” Roth said.

What strikes first, according to Roth, are allergens that come from “dust on the roads and other areas drying out. After that, in maybe June or July, pine pollen, sage, and other plants will strike.”



Allergy Facts

- There is no cure for allergies. You can manage allergies with prevention and treatment.
- Researchers think nasal allergies affect about 50 million people in the United States.
- Allergies affect as many as 30 percent of adults and 40 percent of children.
- Allergic disease, including asthma, is the fifth leading chronic

disease in the U.S. in people of all ages. It is the third most common chronic disease in children under 18.

- In 2012, 11.1 million people were diagnosed with allergic rhinitis.

- In 2010, Americans with nasal swelling spent about \$17.5 billion on health costs. They have also lost more than 6 million work and school days, and made 16 million visits to their doctor.

- Many people with allergies often have more than one type of allergy. The most common indoor/outdoor allergy triggers are: tree, grass and weed pollen, mold spores, dust mites, cockroaches, and cat, dog and rodent dander.

Source: Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

It's not that the allergens will change because of the snow that fell this winter, it's that it makes for a more intense experience for those who suffer because there is likely to be more of everything that blooms.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America says, "An allergy is when your immune system reacts to a foreign substance, called an allergen. It could be something you eat, inhale into your lungs, inject into your body or touch. This reaction

could cause coughing, sneezing, itchy eyes, a runny nose and a scratchy throat. In severe cases, it can cause rashes, hives, low blood pressure, breathing trouble, asthma attacks and even death.”

Roth has a few tips for trying to prevent allergies:

- Use a hepa filter in the house.
- Wash hair at night after a day of exposure to pollen in the air.
- Replace the air filter of a heating and air system.
- For spring cleaning, wear a dust mask.
- Wearing a dust mask outside can help as well, though it may not be practical.

Roth recommends starting with over-the-counter remedies such as Zyrtec (cetirizine) and Claritin (loratadine), while Nasacort (triamcinolone) and flonaze (fluticasone) are nasal sprays. These come in children and adult dosages.

When those don't work, it's like time to see an allergist or an ear, nose, and throat doc.