

Northside Allergy Associates

AUGUST 2011

ROBERT H. OLIVER, MD & MELISSA ORMAN, RN

ISSUE TWO

August marks the unofficial start of ragweed season

Of Americans who are allergic to pollen-producing plants, 75 percent are allergic to ragweed. A single ragweed plant only lives one season, but that one plant produces up to one billion pollen grains. These grains can travel up to 400 miles due to their lightweight texture (1).

There is no cure for ragweed allergy. The best way to control symptoms is to avoid contact with the pollen. A few ways to help control your environment include:

- Keep windows and doors closed at all times during the season.
- Stay indoors with air conditioning. Use a HEPA filter if possible.
- Track the pollen count in your area (www.pollen.com)
- Take antihistamine medication. This will help to control your symptoms. (Consult with your healthcare provider about the best medication for you.)
- Consider allergy treatment with allergy immunotherapy (allergy shots or allergy drops).



1. Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, 2005. *Ragweed Allergy* [online]. Available at <<http://www.aafa.org/display.cfm?id=9&sub=19&cont=26>> [Accessed 19 July 2011].

N O R T H S I D E
A L L E R G Y
A S S O C I A T E S

Our office is located at:
1295 Portland Ave, Suite 24
Rochester, NY 14621

Phone: 585-342-2080
Website: www.drrobertoliver.com
Email: melissao@rhomd.com

N O R T H S I D E
A L L E R G Y
A S S O C I A T E S
1295 Portland Ave, Suite 24
Rochester, NY 14621





Oral Allergy Syndrome

For many people with outdoor allergies, eating certain foods can trigger an allergic reaction in the mouth. This reaction of itchiness and swelling of the mouth may make people think they have a mild food allergy. This reaction is called oral allergy syndrome (OAS), or pollen-food allergy syndrome. Oral sensitivity tends to develop over time, with repeated exposures to inhaled pollens. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, "up to a third of pollen allergy patients may be affected. Most cases are mild, but some can be an early warning sign of a serious, life-threatening severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis" (1).

This is an example of cross-reactivity, as proteins in the fruits and vegetables and certain nuts and spices are similar to the proteins in the pollens (although not exact), and thus cause an allergic reaction. For example, if you are allergic to ragweed you may also have a reaction to bananas and melons (honeydew, cantaloupe, and watermelon), tomatoes, zucchini, sunflower seeds, dandelions, and chamomile tea (1). (Refer to the chart on the right for more examples.)

To help avoid this reaction, cooking fruits and vegetables generally works. The heat breaks down or alters the trigger proteins, which generally prevents the

Foods to Avoid with Allergies to Pollen

<i>If you are allergic to:</i>	<i>You may also have a reaction to:</i>
Birch Pollen	Apples, Carrots, Celery, Hazelnuts, Peaches, Pears, Raw Potatoes 
Ragweed Pollen	Bananas, Melons (cantaloupe, honeydew, and watermelon), Tomatoes 
Grasses	Tomatoes 
Mugwort Pollen	Apples, Carrots, Celery, Kiwi Fruit, Peanuts, Some Spices (caraway seeds, parsley, coriander, anise seeds, fennel seeds) 

immune system from recognizing the proteins as foreign (3). If you have experienced severe symptoms, such as a rash, shortness of breath, wheezing, swelling, or difficulty breathing after eating certain foods, you should avoid that food. It is also a good idea to keep a list of any trigger foods and never eat anything that causes your symptoms (1).

To identify an allergy to inhaled pollens, a skin sensitivity test may be recommended by your doctor or allergist. This is done with a skin-prick test on the forearms, or the back is used by some allergists. A small amount of the allergen extract is introduced to the body, and the site is assessed after about 15 to 20 minutes. If the site is red, swollen, and itchy, it is likely an allergic reaction.

For more information, contact your doctor or allergist.

REFERENCES:

1. Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. *Oral Allergy Syndrome*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.aafa.org/display.cfm?id=9&sub=20&cont=728>> [Accessed 15 July 2011].
2. Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, 2005. *Ragweed Allergy*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.aafa.org/display.cfm?id=9&sub=19&cont=267>> [Accessed 19 July 2011].
3. Mayo Clinic, 2011. *Food allergy*. [online] Available at: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/food-allergy/DS00082/DSECTION=symptoms> [Accessed 15 July 2011].



NORTH SIDE
ALLERGY
ASSOCIATES

Our office is located at:
1295 Portland Ave, Suite 24
Rochester, NY 14621

Phone: 585-342-2080
Website: www.drrobertoliver.com
Email: melissao@rhond.com