

## Allergies May Continue Into Fall Months: Ragweed, Molds And Dust Mites Are Chief Culprits

(NAPSA)—It's a common misconception that allergies are only an issue during the springtime when flowers are in full bloom and people are "spring cleaning." In fact, allergens and pollen levels can be equal to and even greater during fall months.

It is important for allergy sufferers to be aware of signs and symptoms, as well as potential allergens they may come into contact with during fall months. The most common triggers of fall allergies include:

- **Ragweed**—With pollen that can travel as far as 400 miles with the wind, ragweed is most abundant along roadsides and in fields in the Midwest and central United States.

- **Trees**—Those that pollinate during fall include the cedar elm, Chinese elm, September elm and eucalyptus.

- **Molds**—Mold counts can peak during fall months. Outdoor molds can be found in leaf piles, soil and rotting wood. Indoor molds are often found in damp areas including basements, showers and near washers and dryers.

- **Dust mites**—When the air conditioning is turned off, dust mites can accumulate and thrive. When people turn on the heat, dust mites are released into the environment.

According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, each year more than 50 million Americans suffer from some sort of allergy. One of the areas often affected by allergies is the eyes. When the eyes are affected, it is called ocular allergies. People who suffer from ocular allergies may experience symptoms such as itchy, red and/or watery eyes.

Addressing ocular allergy symptoms before they start may help reduce the severity of the allergic reaction. Experts recommend patients consult their physician before the onset of symptoms. In addition, Dr. Penny Asbell, professor of ophthalmology, Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New

York City, offers the following advice:

- Be aware of environmental triggers that may cause ocular allergies. You may think your symptoms are a result of the common cold, but they may be a result of allergies.

- Get an eye exam—especially if there's a family history of eye problems, such as glaucoma, macular degeneration or amblyopia (lazy eye).

"If you constantly rub your eyes or someone in your family complains about 'itchy' eyes, don't ignore the problem," says Dr. Asbell. "Fortunately, there are preventative measures your doctor can recommend for ocular allergies, including eye drops."

Dr. Asbell also offers the following advice for people who regularly experience allergies:

- **Change the environment**—Remove or reduce the allergy-inducing factors such as pet hair, dust mites or pollen. As long as these troublemakers are around, those with allergies will experience symptoms.

- **Clean up your act**—Wash your hands to remove the problem-causing antigens and flush your eyes with an artificial tears product. Avoid eye drops that solely constrict the blood vessels in the eye, masking the underlying problem. Take showers before bedtime, apply cold compresses to the eyes and keep your hands away from your eyes to avoid introducing germs and triggering more swelling in the eyes.

- **See your doctor**—If problems persist, seek professional help. Ask your primary-care physician for a referral to an ophthalmologist or optometrist. They may prescribe a preventative medication, such as Zaditor™ (ketotifen fumarate ophthalmic solution, 0.025 percent), which is indicated for the temporary prevention of itching of the eye due to exposure to allergens such as pollen, pollution, dust or animal dander.

For more information on Zaditor, visit [www.zaditor.com](http://www.zaditor.com).