SEASONAL ALLERGY GUIDE
By Sherelle Black and Stephen Burnett
Design by Kara Nordstrom

North Texas is filled with year-round seasonal allergens spawned from the pollen of trees, ragweed, pigweed and other. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America ranked the Dallas area No. 7 on its 2014 “100 Most Challenging Places to live with Allergies” list.

Sources: Eric J. Schmitt, M.D., Frisco Allergy and Asthma Center; William C. Howland III, M.D., Allergy and Asthma Center of Austin; Katherine Webster, LAc, MAcOM, Texas Center for Acupuncture & Herbal Medicine

Local allergists recommend a variety of treatments that can help prevent or relieve most seasonal allergies and their symptoms.

**Antihistamines—oral, nasal sprays and eye drops**
The human body reacts to pollen by releasing histamines, which cause congestion, itchy eyes and other symptoms. Antihistamines counter the body’s reactions and are available without a prescription.

**Nasal steroids**
Patients opting for this treatment must begin using nasal steroids before an allergy season and use them daily during the season, along with other medications, such as antihistamines.

**Immunotherapy**
Allergists can treat sufferers with injections or tongue tablets that contain weakened allergen doses. The treatment allows the body to slowly become more tolerant or immune to the presence of allergens. These treatments are prescription-only and are administered by a doctor. Patients may respond to these treatments with allergic reactions, requiring supervision and treatment with an epinephrine autoinjector to prevent shock.

**Injections:** Patients with 3–5 years of this treatment may have fewer allergies for years.

**Oralair, Ragwitek and Grastek:** In April the Food and Drug Administration approved these tablets that are designed to treat specific forms of seasonal allergies.

Northern allergy clinics
Allergy and Asthma Center for Adults & Children
8941 Coit Road, Ste. 100
972-668-2200
www.allergy-asthmacenter.com

North Texas Asthma and Allergy Center
3721 W. 15th St., Ste. 602
972-867-1600
www.northtexasasthma.com

Dr. Seshagiri A. Rao
3016 Communications Parkway, Ste. 100
972-964-7373
www.allergyandasthmatre-mentcenter.com

South West Allergy & Asthma
6101 Windcom Court, Ste. 400
972-398-3500
www.swallergy.com

List is not comprehensive.

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Do ALLERGIES cause...

**HEADACHES?** Most headaches are migraines or sinus-related, not due to effects of allergies.

**NASAL INFLAMMATION?** This may result from colds or non-allergic rhinitis, a disease that causes allergy-like symptoms; overuse of nasal sprays; or reactions to odors, smoke, dust, dirt and other non-allergens.

**FATIGUE?** Sleep deprivation or even sleep apnea, not allergies, causes tiredness.

I HAVE ALLERGIES BECAUSE MY IMMUNE SYSTEM IS WEAK
Allergies result from overactive immune systems so the solution is instead to calm the system.

I'M SICKENED BY PET PELLETS
All pets can produce allergens, but some shed less allergens than others.

ALLERGY SHOTS ARE EXPENSIVE
Insurance companies provide benefits for allergen immunotherapy because the treatment is cost-effective relative to medications.

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