



2020 Allergy Capitals™ Report Ranks the Most Challenging Cities in the U.S. for Allergies

Richmond, Virginia, takes the hardest hit for spring and fall allergies

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 10, 2020 – Today, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), the premiere patient advocacy organization representing more than 60 million Americans with asthma and allergies, released its annual Allergy Capitals™ report for 2020. The report identifies the most challenging places to live with spring and fall allergies in the top 100 metropolitan areas in the U.S. *Richmond, Virginia*, takes the top spot based on higher-than-average spring and fall pollen scores, higher-than-average medication usage and availability of board-certified allergists in the area. The top 10 Allergy Capitals for 2020 are:

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| 1. Richmond, Virginia | 6. New Haven, Connecticut |
| 2. Scranton, Pennsylvania | 7. San Antonio, Texas |
| 3. Springfield, Massachusetts | 8. Bridgeport, Connecticut |
| 4. Hartford, Connecticut | 9. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma |
| 5. McAllen, Texas | 10. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania |

See the full 100-city ranking at allergycapitals.com. The report lists overall rankings and breaks down a seasonal ranking for spring and fall.

“For more than 50 years, the prevalence of allergic diseases has risen and it’s no coincidence that during the same time, pollen seasons have become stronger and longer due to warmer temperatures,” says Kenneth Mendez, AAFA CEO and president. “The Allergy Capitals report helps raise awareness about the impact of seasonal allergies, how people can prepare and start proper treatment. Local communities can also use the report as a tool to identify how to better meet the needs of their residents living with allergies and allergic asthma.”

Seasonal nasal allergies cause runny and congested noses, inflamed sinuses, relentless sneezing and other symptoms each spring through fall. Pollen can also trigger asthma attacks. Tree pollen season starts as early as January in some parts of the U.S. and continues through summer. In the fall, weed pollen – especially ragweed pollen – is responsible for symptoms. But relief is possible with the right treatment and by managing contact with pollen.

“There are steps you can take to limit your exposure to seasonal allergens like pollen,” says Mitchell Grayson, M.D., FAAAAI, FAAAAI, allergist/immunologist at Nationwide Children’s Hospital and chair of AAFA’s Medical Scientific Council. “But it is impossible to avoid pollen completely so it’s important to talk with your allergist about an allergy treatment plan to keep your symptoms under control.”

Treatment options can include over-the-counter or prescription allergy medicines. Allergy immunotherapy can help reduce or prevent allergy symptoms. These treatments are most effective if they are started before the allergy season begins.



About the Research

The Allergy Capitals™ ranking is an annual research and educational project of AAFA, designed to help patients recognize, prevent and safely treat allergy symptoms. Through this ranking, AAFA raises awareness about the impact of seasonal allergies and provides helpful information designed to improve the quality of life for people who experience them. The ranking is based on local spring and fall pollen levels, use of allergy medication and the number of board-certified allergists in each metro area. Visit allergycapitals.com to see the full list, study methodology and learn more about allergy diagnosis, prevention and treatment.

About AAFA

Founded in 1953, AAFA is the oldest and largest non-profit patient organization dedicated to saving lives and reducing the burden of disease for people with asthma, allergies and related conditions through research, education, advocacy and support. AAFA empowers patients and their families by providing practical, evidence-based information and community programs and services. AAFA offers extensive online support communities for individuals and families affected by asthma and allergic diseases, such as food allergies and atopic dermatitis (eczema). AAFA also helps consumers identify healthier products for the home and indoor environment through the **asthma & allergy friendly®** Certification Program. For more information, visit www.aafa.org, www.kidswithfoodallergies.org and www.aafa.org/certified

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