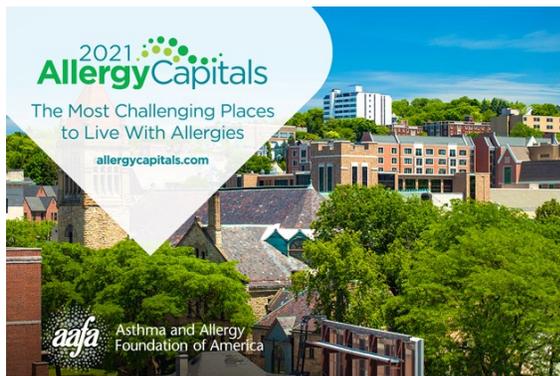


Press Release

## AAFA's 2021 Allergy Capitals™ Report Ranks Top U.S. Cities for Seasonal Allergies

*Climate change continues to drive harsher allergy seasons; Scranton, Pennsylvania leads the U.S. for pollen allergy*



Washington D.C., February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 — Today, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) released its annual Allergy Capitals™ report for 2021. The report identifies the most challenging cities for spring and fall allergies in the top 100 metropolitan areas in the United States. Scranton, Pennsylvania takes the top spot for 2021. Cities are ranked based on three factors: spring and fall pollen scores, over-the-counter medicine use, and availability of board-certified allergists. Richmond, Virginia held the #1 title in 2020.

The top 20 Allergy Capitals™ for 2021 are:

1. Scranton, Pennsylvania
2. Richmond, Virginia
3. Wichita, Kansas
4. McAllen, Texas
5. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
6. Hartford, Connecticut
7. Springfield, Massachusetts
8. New Haven, Connecticut
9. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
10. Bridgeport, Connecticut
11. Albany, New York
12. Virginia Beach, Virginia
13. Buffalo, New York
14. San Antonio, Texas
15. Dayton, Ohio
16. Riverside, California
17. Las Vegas, Nevada
18. Memphis, Tennessee
19. Dallas, Texas
20. Louisville, Kentucky

To see the complete, 100-city list go to [allergycapitals.com](https://allergycapitals.com). The report lists overall annual rankings and breaks down a seasonal ranking for spring and fall.

“Allergies are a serious public health concern. More than 24 million people in the U.S. have seasonal allergic rhinitis, more commonly referred to as hay fever. Pollen allergies are a major cause. AAFA’s Allergy Capitals™ report helps more Americans make sense of the impact on individual and community health,” says Kenneth Mendez, CEO and president of AAFA. “Two notable parts of our 2021 report include the effect of COVID-19 and climate change on seasonal allergies. In 2020, fewer people felt the impact of pollen allergies. This is likely due to COVID-19 restrictions with more people staying indoors. But climate change continues to cause longer and more severe allergy seasons. If we don’t slow down the cycle, pollen production will only intensify. This means symptoms could worsen as climate change continues to evolve.”

Seasonal pollen allergies cause nasal, sinus, 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 including ragweed, causes symptoms. But relief is possible with the right treatment and by managing contact with pollen.

“It’s important people with seasonal allergies prepare. They should try their best to reduce exposure to pollen,” says Dr. Mitchell Grayson, Chair of AAFA’s Medical Scientific Council and Director of the Division of Allergy and Immunology at Nationwide Children’s Hospital and The Ohio State University. “Schedule an appointment with your allergist to work on a treatment plan together to help reduce allergy symptoms when prevention is not enough.”

Treatment options include over-the-counter or prescription allergy medicines. Medications are most effective when started before allergy season begins. AAFA has resources to help people tell the difference between asthma, COVID-19, flu, cold or seasonal allergy symptoms. You can find it via our COVID-19 Resource Center on [aafa.org](https://www.aafa.org).

For the latest AAFA news and resources go to [aafa.org](https://www.aafa.org).

**Press Contact:**

Kafi Drexel Brown, Public Relations Director  
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA)  
Cellular: 202.974.1223  
[kbrown@aafa.org](mailto:kbrown@aafa.org)

##

**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](https://www.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 offers extensive support for individuals and families affected by asthma and allergic diseases, such as food allergies and atopic dermatitis (eczema). Through its online patient support communities, network of local chapters and affiliated support groups, AAFA empowers patients and their families by providing practical, evidence-based information and community programs and services. AAFA is the only asthma and allergy patient advocacy group that is certified to meet the standards of excellence set by the National Health Council. For more information, visit [www.aafa.org](https://www.aafa.org).