

# October Newsletter

## TEAL PUMPKIN PROJECT 2021



### What is the Teal Pumpkin Project?

The Teal Pumpkin Project was created by Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) to help increase awareness and improve the lives of Americans with food allergies. Many children with food allergies miss out on events in their childhood due to safety issues that could occur if the child has a exposure to their food allergen. Birthday parties, field trips, school lunch time, sleepovers, and trick-or-treating can turn into life-threatening events if all participants are not careful and a child with a severe food allergy has an accidental exposure. This project aims to provide a food allergy friendly experience for children with food allergies at Halloween. They have created a way for kids with food allergies to safely trick-or-treat.

### How Do I Participate?

By participating in the Teal Pumpkin Project, you are helping to create an inclusive environment for children with food allergies of all severities. Although many families with children with food allergies choose to participate, you do not need to be a home with food allergies to participate!

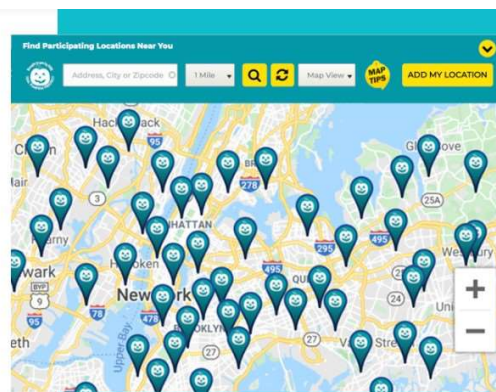
- 1) Prepare by providing non-food treats for trick-or-treaters such as glow sticks or small toys.
- 2) Once you have food-safe treats, simply place a teal pumpkin on your doorstep to inform trick-or-treaters that you have non-food treats available.
- 3) Add your house to the map to help families map out allergy-friendly homes to trick-or-treat at.
- 4) Spread the word and encourage others in your neighborhood to participate!

### Add Your House to the Map!

#### JUST LAUNCHED!

By adding your home to the Teal Pumpkin Project map, you are making your house easy to find for those on the hunt for non-food treats. The more houses added to the map, the more inclusive (and therefore more fun) we can make Halloween!

[LEARN MORE](#) →



To learn more about the Teal Pumpkin Project go to <https://www.foodallergy.org/our-initiatives/awareness-campaigns/living-teal/teal-pumpkin-project/>!

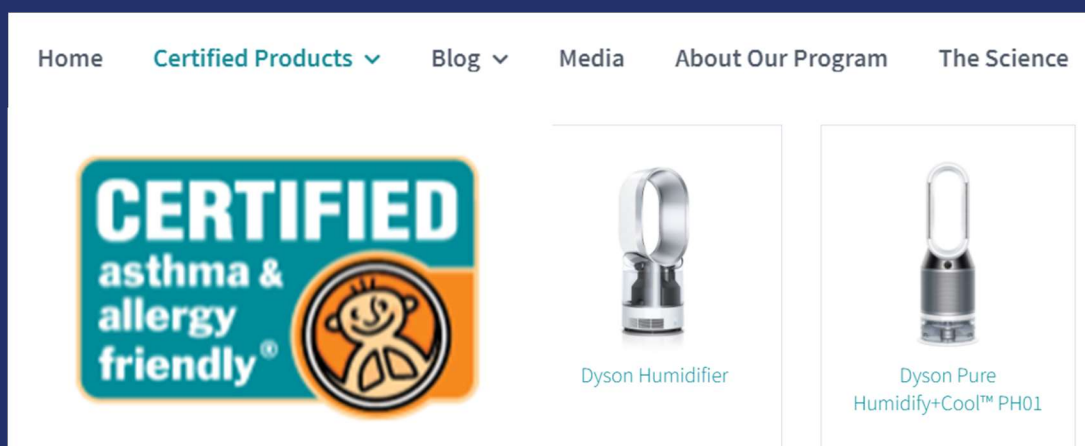
# BENEFITS OF A HUMIDIFIER AS HUMIDITY LEVELS DROP

With colder temperatures, fall and winter also bring out lower humidity levels in the air. Humidity is another name for the moisture content in the air. Low humidity levels can dry out the skin and lead to an eczema flare. It can also dry out mucous membranes and cause increased irritation of the nose and airways causing a flare of asthma symptoms. For those reasons, most allergists recommend that those suffering from asthma and allergies keep the humidity levels in their home between 40 and 50%.

Humidifiers help to increase the humidity, or moisture content in the air, by introducing more water vapor into the air. Water can provide a lot of great benefits, but when left standing it can also be a breeding ground for bacteria and molds. Therefore, humidity levels should not exceed 50% within the home.

It is crucial to pick a humidifier that can be easily cleaned manually or one that self-cleans while it is on. It is always best to pick a cool mist humidifier since they are safer in that spills of cool water won't burn the skin, and they are less likely to promote the growth of bacteria and mold than warm water.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) and Allergy Standards Limited (ASL) have teamed up to create a certification program to help guide consumers to choose effective allergy and asthma friendly products including humidifiers. To receive AAFA certification, a humidifier must be able to achieve and maintain the required humidity levels of 40-50%, be able to self-sanitize the water contained in the device and be able to reduce pre-existing contamination in the room. With so many products on the market, their list of certified products can help narrow down the search to make it easier to find a humidifier effective for allergies.



# Fall Seasonal Allergies



Common fall allergens that cause seasonal symptoms include weeds such as ragweed and some molds. Fall allergy season for those with weed allergies will start in August and last through October. Weather conditions such as a drought, increased rainfall, snow, and more can affect the length and severity of these allergy seasons. Fall allergies are not necessarily more severe this year, but many may be experiencing an increase in symptoms on days where there are high pollen counts or poor air quality due to the abundance of forest fires at this time. Smoke in the air as well as weed pollen and mold spores can trigger allergic responses that result in symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose and watery eyes, congestion, itchy nose and eyes, cough, and asthma exacerbations.

If you are prone to seasonal allergies, several options include:

- Take a daily non-sedating antihistamine such as Zyrtec or Claritin
- Begin using nasal sprays or your inhaler as needed or at the onset of any mild symptoms
- Do your best to reduce exposure to the known allergens
- Wear a mask covering the nose and mouth to reduce the volume of allergens inhaled
- Avoid going outside on windy days and delegate tasks such as lawn-mowing and other yard work to someone who does not have allergy symptoms
- Inside the home:
  - use hypoallergenic bedding and pillow covers, wash bedding on hot, use an air purifier/ vacuum with a HEPA filter, and keep windows closed on days with high pollen counts

If you do not know what you are allergic to, we recommend making an appointment for allergy testing so that you can have a more targeted approach to avoiding the allergens. Depending on the severity of your symptoms and your specific needs, you may be a candidate for subcutaneous (allergy shots), sublingual (SLIT) or Precision Immune Targeting (ILIT).



## OCTOBER POLLEN COUNTS

Check out these updates for the pollen counts in your area for the month of September. For the most up to date information, you can also head to the American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology website where they have certified pollen counting stations that are part of the National Allergy Bureau.

### California Bay Area Pollen Counts

Tree Pollen Counts - **Moderate**

- Top species found: Elm, Pine Family

Weed Pollen Counts - **Low**

- Top species found: Ragweed

Grass Pollen Counts – **Not Present**

Mold Count – **Low**

- Top species found: Basidiospores: Coprinus, Agrocybe, Agaricus, Inocybe, Laccaria, Ganoderma; Cladosporium; Ascospores: Leptosphaeria, Venturia, Ascobolus, Diatrypaceae, Pleosporia, Xylaria, Chaetomium, Sporomiella, Claviceps, Ascomycete

### Washington/Oregon Pollen Counts

Tree Pollen Counts – **Low**

- Top species found: Juniper, Cedar

Weed Pollen Counts - **Not Present**

Grass Pollen Counts - **Not Present**

Mold Count - **Not Present**

### Idaho Pollen Counts

Tree Pollen Counts - **Not Present**

Weed Pollen Counts – **High**

- Top species found: Sage, Wormwood

Grass Pollen Counts – **Not Present**

Mold Count – **Moderate**

- Top species found: Cladosporium, Alternaria, Smuts/Myxomycetes: Fuligo, grass smut, Urocystis, Ustilago, Tilletia

## MEDIA COVERAGE



### Doctors Explain Why Your Allergies May Feel Worse as Those Crisp Autumn Days Set In

Like spring allergens, these fall culprits tend to be most prevalent for a specific period of time - but the climate can also have an impact. "Fall allergy season for those with weed allergies will start in August and last through October," explained [Sanjeev Jain](#), MD, PhD, a board-certified allergist and immunologist practicing at Columbia Asthma and Allergy Clinic. "Weather conditions such as a drought, [increased rainfall](#), snow, temperature, and other factors can affect the length and severity of these allergy seasons."

### Kids 5 And Up Could Be Vaccinated By Halloween—Here's What Parents Need To Know

#### How Effective is the Vaccine For Kids?

Sanjeev Jain, MD, PhD, FAAAAI is a board-certified allergist and immunologist at Columbia Allergy. He explained that the full report on efficacy for children under the age of 12 hasn't been released to the public yet.

"However, Pfizer did release a statement that the antibody response reported in the 2,268 participants who were 5 to 11 years of age was comparable to that reported in adults," he said. "Once the vaccine is approved for administration, the full report on the efficacy of the vaccine will be available."



So are their hints to tell if you're dealing with fall allergies instead of COVID-19? Sanjeev Jain, MD, board-certified allergist and immunologist at [Columbia Allergy](#), provides some tips to discern between the two. If the bulk of your symptoms involve sneezing, it's more likely to be an allergic reaction, because sneezing isn't a common COVID-19 symptom, he says.

Allergies generally don't often bring fevers or a loss of taste and smell. So if you're dealing with either of those things, that's a tell-tale sign it might be something more serious. And if you're facing allergy symptoms for the first time in your life—well, it's worth getting a COVID-19 test to ensure it's not something more serious.

Ultimately, these are guideposts, but they aren't rules: "The only way to be completely sure that your symptoms are because of allergies and not COVID is to get tested for COVID," Dr. Jain says.



### How To Tell If You're Dealing With Fall Allergies or COVID-19 Symptoms

*Columbia Allergy Clinic has 13 convenient locations across state lines in Fremont, Oakland, Redwood City, California; Beaverton, Clackamas, Gresham, McMinnville, and Tigard, Oregon; Bellevue, Fishers Landing, Longview, and Salmon Creek, Washington; and Eagle, Idaho.*

<https://www.columbiaallergy.com/>