

How the Saharan dust plume could make your allergies worse

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(HealthDay)—As the giant Saharan dust plume continues its 5,000-mile

journey across the Atlantic Ocean, experts warn that people in its path can expect to have flare-ups of allergies and asthma.

The massive dust cloud is expected to hit the U.S. Gulf Coast this week.

"The [tiny dust particles](#) contained in the plume will cause eye, nose and throat irritation for anyone who comes in their path, but particularly for allergy and asthma sufferers," said allergist Dr. J. Allen Meadows, president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology.

"Keep in mind this does not relate to traditional dust mite allergy, but [dust storms](#), air pollution and other outdoor irritants can make asthma symptoms worse and make breathing more difficult," he said in a college news release.

The dust plume, drifting from North Africa across the Atlantic to North America, occurs a few times every year, experts say. But this week, the cloud of dust is especially huge, and it's already hit the Caribbean.

These tips may help you weather the health risks of the Saharan plume:

- Keep track of weather reports that provide information on air quality. Stay inside in air conditioning if conditions worsen.
- Wear a face mask outside. It can help keep [dust particles](#) out of the nose and mouth (and, of course, help prevent transmission of COVID-19, as well).
- Stick with your medication regimen to keep allergy and asthma symptoms under control, and your breathing regulated.
- Keep calm. Stress can make asthma and allergies harder to manage, boosting the risk of flare-ups. Stress can also increase the duration and severity of symptoms.

- Talk to an allergist if your symptoms get worse due to the Saharan plume.

More information: The Allergy & Asthma Network can answer questions [about controlling your symptoms](#).

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