



# Kentucky Bluegrass Allergen Fact Sheet

## About kentucky bluegrass

Best suited for cool, humid climates, Kentucky bluegrass isn't native to Kentucky nor the United States.<sup>1</sup> Rather, it originates in Europe, Asia, and probably some countries of northern Africa and has been introduced in a host of countries and continents.<sup>2</sup> The cool-season mat-forming grass has soft, blue-green leaves and grows 30 to 100 centimeters (12 to 40 inches) tall.<sup>2,3</sup> Known by several names, such as bird grass, English grass, green grass, June grass, common meadow-grass, and smoothstalk bluegrass, Kentucky bluegrass is a perennial found along seashores and in pasture and arable land (cropland), roadsides, forest edges, and marshes.<sup>2</sup> While valued as pasture and turf grass (particularly for use in golf courses), Kentucky bluegrass is severely allergenic and sheds large amounts of wind-borne pollen from spring to fall, which can cause serious pollinosis, or hay fever.<sup>2,4,5</sup>

## Where is kentucky bluegrass grass found?

Bermuda grass is thought to have originated in Africa; however, it has spread virtually worldwide to places such as Asia, Europe, the Caribbean, Pacific Ocean islands, Australasia, Antarctica, and North, Central, and South America.<sup>2,6</sup>

## Are there other allergens I could be sensitized to?

Many patients with Kentucky bluegrass allergy can experience symptoms when exposed to other allergens such as tree, weed, or grass pollens, making it difficult to determine which pollen is causing the symptoms, especially when pollen seasons are overlapping. This is called cross reactivity and occurs when your body's immune system identifies the proteins, or components, in different substances as being structurally similar or biologically related, thus triggering a response.<sup>8</sup> Other respiratory allergens that may cause reactions associated with Kentucky bluegrass are other grasses, including wheat, along with tree and weed pollens.<sup>8</sup>

If you experience an itchy mouth or throat after eating fresh fruit or raw vegetables, you may suffer from oral allergy syndrome (OAS), sometimes called pollen food allergy syndrome (PFAS). This condition is also caused by your immune system's reaction to similar proteins, or components, found in different allergens. It is quite common, with up to 25% of children with allergic rhinitis (i.e., hay fever) also suffering from OAS.<sup>9</sup> Common plant foods involved in OAS for Kentucky bluegrass include melon, watermelon, citrus, banana, pineapple, persimmon, zucchini, tomato, hazelnut, peanut, and many more.<sup>8</sup>

Knowing the proteins, or components, within each allergen that are triggering your symptoms can help guide your management plan. With that in mind, and based on your symptom history, your healthcare provider may suggest something called a specific IgE component test, which can help reveal other pollens and foods you may react to. Results from this test can also help your healthcare provider decide if allergen immunotherapy may reduce your symptoms.<sup>8</sup>

## COMMON SYMPTOMS

Kentucky bluegrass allergy symptoms can be similar to many other pollen allergies and may include:<sup>6,9</sup>

- Sneezing
- Nasal congestion
- Runny nose
- Watery eyes
- Itchy throat and eyes
- Wheezing

If you're sensitized to Kentucky bluegrass and have asthma, grass pollen may trigger or worsen asthma symptoms, such as coughing and wheezing.<sup>6,9</sup>

While symptoms are usually limited to the throat, nose, and eyes, some people who are severely allergic to grass may also develop hives (urticaria) upon contact with its pollen.<sup>7</sup>



## HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M ALLERGIC?

Together with your symptom history, skin-prick testing or specific IgE blood testing can help determine if you are sensitized to a particular allergen. If you are diagnosed with an allergy, your healthcare provider will work with you to create a management plan.

## POLLEN SEASON

Kentucky bluegrass releases large amounts of wind-borne pollen from spring to fall.<sup>4,7</sup>



## IS THERE A RISK FOR A SEVERE EVENT?

Responses close to anaphylaxis have occurred in the most dangerous reaction cases.<sup>7</sup> Plus, anaphylaxis has been reported in cases where abraded skin contacted allergenic grass.<sup>10</sup>

### Already have your specific IgE component test results?

Your component test results will include the name of the components (a series of letters and numbers). Your healthcare provider will likely review the results with you, but here you'll find an at-a-glance breakdown you can use as a reference. Simply match the component names to the list below to see what they mean in terms of symptom management.<sup>8</sup>

#### rPhl p 1, rPhl 5b

- Indicates that the symptoms may be caused by grass pollen.<sup>8</sup>
- Grass pollen immunotherapy may be an option.<sup>8</sup>

#### rPhl p 7

- Indicates symptoms may be caused by grass or by other pollen, e.g., from trees and weeds. Further examination may be considered to confirm all allergy triggers.<sup>8</sup>
- May be associated with more severe symptoms and higher prevalence of asthma than other grass pollen allergies.<sup>8</sup>

#### rPhl p 12

- Indicates that symptoms may be caused by grass or by other pollen, e.g., from trees and weeds.<sup>8</sup>
- May be associated with PFAS after ingestion of fruit and vegetables, e.g., melon, tomato, apple, celery. Further examination may be considered.<sup>8</sup>

#### MUXF3 (CCD)

- Positive specific IgE for Kentucky bluegrass in combination with MUXF3 CCD (Cross-reactive Carbohydrate Determinant) being the only positive component test indicates that the cause of symptoms may be something other than grass pollen.<sup>8</sup>

### How do I manage my allergy?

The management of allergic rhinitis includes avoidance of relevant allergens, symptomatic treatment, and allergen immunotherapy.<sup>9,11,12</sup>

#### Exposure reduction

- Check local pollen counts daily and limit time outside when pollen counts are high. Rain helps clear pollen from the air, so the best time to go outside is after a good rain.
- Delegate outdoor chores whenever possible and wear a pollen mask if you must do outside tasks.
- Keep windows closed and use air conditioning instead.
- Wash bedding at least once a week in hot, soapy water.
- Wash your clothes after outdoor activities and dry all clothes in a dryer as opposed to line drying outdoors.
- Bathe and wash your hair every day before bedtime to keep pollen out of your bed.
- Wipe off any pets to remove pollen before letting them into your home.
- Ensure everyone removes their shoes before entering your home.
- Use certified asthma and allergy air filters.

#### Symptom relief

- Pharmacological treatment, including antihistamines, corticosteroids, decongestants, and saline douches.
- Allergen immunotherapy as directed by your healthcare provider.

View all references at the bottom of the online allergen fact sheets at [AllergyInsider.com](http://AllergyInsider.com) >

\*These products may not be approved for clinical use in your country. Please work with your healthcare provider to understand availability.

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