

High mold count responsible for Chicago's dangerous air quality warning

27 September 2010

Chicago's mold count today is more than 81,000 spores per cubic meter - well over the 50,000 spores p.c.m. threshold that signals a dangerous air quality warning. Today's mold count is the highest of the season and the highest in five years.

"Heavy chest and difficulty breathing, runny noses and fatigue will be common among Chicagoans with sensitive respiratory systems," said Dr. Joseph Leija, an allergist at Loyola Gottlieb Memorial Hospital in Melrose Park, Ill.

Dr. Leija is solely certified by the National [Allergy Bureau](#) to perform the daily official allergy count for the Midwest.

"The recent gusty winds, the downpours of rain, the recent hot 90-degree weather, the barometric pressure changes and the boost in humidity contributed to the dangerously high mold count we are suffering this September in Chicago," he said of the unusual morning count that took him three and a half hours to complete - 45 minutes longer than usual due to the plethora of mold spores.

"Asthma sufferers should stay indoors and rest as much as possible, take their allergy medications and consult their allergist if symptoms worsen," he advised.

Dr. Leija warns that the allergy count is for the outside air alone.

"Many patients suffered flooding and, despite attempts to remove all damaged materials, are battling indoor mold that is aggravating their health," he said.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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