

# RECENT IN RETAIL ALLERGIES ON THE RISE

Over 50 million Americans suffer from allergies each year. And many experts anticipate that the 2020 allergy season will be the worst one yet. What's causing this yearly increase and what should brands expect moving forward? Let's dig in.

## Why are seasonal allergies becoming more prominent?

Rising temperatures have been pegged as the main culprit behind lengthier allergy seasons and more common cases. In addition, changes in our overall lifestyle like avoiding overexposure to sun, spending more time indoors and increased cleanliness (even before COVID-19) have affected the strength of our immune systems. All these factors together have impacted the rise and frequency of seasonal allergies.



### HIGHER TEMPS

The effects of a warmer climate create favorable growing conditions for common allergens like ragweed.



### URBAN PLANNING

City planners often favor male trees because they don't produce fruits or seeds. Although this keeps streets cleaner, they produce lots of pollen.



### POOR AIR QUALITY

From car exhausts to tobacco smoke to Saharan dust, these pollutants easily aggravate the respiratory system.



### HEALTH AWARENESS

Improvements in lifestyle and cleanliness have inadvertently reduced our exposure to good bacteria which supports the immune system.

## Don't underestimate Private Label Brands

Although National Allergy Brands account for 63% of category dollars, Private Label brands can and should be viewed as a threat. Private Label brands YOY dollar growth is currently outpacing National brands by 0.2 pts — while units are declining -0.3% vs PY. (Which means National Brands are still selling more.)

Overall, the 2019 OTC allergy medication category increased 2.0% vs 2018. So even with category growth, we have seen Private Label brands maintain their share YOY.



# Consumers are loyal to their allergy medicine

The YTD Cold-Allergy-Sinus category is up +6% vs YA. The initial growth was heavily fueled by COVID-19 stockpiling throughout the month of March. But it's important to note, that even amidst the pantry stocking phase, dollar share between PL and National Brands remained mostly unchanged — signaling that brand loyalty in the OTC Allergy Medicine Category is high.



## What should brands expect next?



### CHANNEL SHIFTING

In our current climate, more consumers are shopping online or at smaller stores. How are you building your online strategy?



### RISE OF IMMUNOTHERAPY

Healthcare polices could begin to include immunotherapy as part of their standard coverage — which would minimize allergy cases and therefore weaken OTC brands.



### ENHANCED PROMOTIONS

Allergies happen every day and all year. This means there is more opportunity for secondary in-store placement and new variations in packaging (i.e., travel size).



### NEW SHOPPERS

Due to the similarity in symptoms, COVID-19 has raised awareness for allergies. How are you engaging new category shoppers and building brand loyalty?

As consumer lifestyles and buying behaviors evolve, how is your brand engaging with allergy shoppers all year long?  
We can help.

IRI Data: Calendar Year 2019 Ending 12-29-19  
IRI MJUL0 YTD ending 07.12.20  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/16/how-urban-planners-preference-for-male-trees-has-made-you-hay-fever-worse>  
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[https://www.medicinenet.com/air\\_pollution\\_and\\_allergies\\_connection/Views.htm](https://www.medicinenet.com/air_pollution_and_allergies_connection/Views.htm)  
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