

Allergies

Allergies in general

- Characterized by reactions to normally harmless substances.
 - Caused by a substance called an allergen.
 - Allergens include dust, certain foods, pollen, mold, some medicines and insect poisons.
 - Most of these cause no reaction in non-allergenic people.
 - Those who are allergic may experience itching, sneezing, coughing, difficulty breathing or rash.
 - Tends to be an inherited characteristic.
 - In most cases, allergy symptoms are short-lived and only cause mild problems.
 - Treatment involves avoidance of the allergen as well as medication to relieve symptoms.
- This can be a seasonal or a year-round problem.
 - Seasonal allergic rhinitis, also known as hay fever, is caused by an allergy to pollens, grasses or weeds.
 - Common symptoms include nasal congestion, watery-itchy eyes, itchy nose, itchy throat, sneezing and headache.
 - These symptoms are very similar to those of a cold. Difference is colds are not as common in the summer months and last for about a week.
 - Allergy symptoms can last for weeks to months and often begin when plants start to pollinate.
 - Year round allergies can occur throughout the year.
 - Includes allergies to house dust, animal dander, certain foods and medication.
 - Symptoms are similar to those of seasonal allergies.
 - People with asthma have a higher incidence of having allergies.

Allergic rhinitis

- A general term used to apply to anyone who has symptoms of nasal congestion, sneezing and a runny nose.



MEDICINE CENTRE
PHARMACY

Food allergies

- Most common in children and usually outgrow the allergy.
- The most common causes of food allergies are milk, wheat, soy, egg, peanuts and fish.
- Food should be avoided that contain the specific allergen.
- Check food labels carefully and advise teachers, supervisors and others of any known food allergies.

Insect allergies

- Many people are allergic to stinging insects such as wasps, bees, hornets and yellow jackets.
- Usual reaction may involve redness, swelling, pain and itching.
- May also involve nausea, dizziness, stomach cramps, diarrhea, shortness of breath and wheezing.
- In some cases, a sharp fall in blood pressure may result in shock or loss of consciousness. This is also known as anaphylaxis.

Treating allergies

- The best treatment for allergies is to avoid the allergen.
- Avoid seasonal allergies by keeping doors and windows shut during summer months.

- Avoid year-round allergens by keeping the home dust free by cleaning regularly, clean heating ducts, fan filters and air ducts. Decrease exposure to dust mites by enclosing pillows and mattresses in allergy proof bedding, hardwood floors or tiles are better than carpets.
- Avoid food allergens by checking the labels of food products. Ask for the ingredients in dishes at restaurants.
- Avoid insect stings by keeping foods covered and trash tightly closed thereby decreasing the attraction by smell. Avoid the use of colognes, perfumes, scented hair spray or lotions.
- Talk to your physician or pharmacist about an EpiPen device. If you require one, carry it with you at all times.

Notes: