

DESCRIPTION

An allergic response to an allergen in the air that may affect the eyes, nose, sinuses, throat, and bronchial tubes in the lungs. Attacks may flare up in pollen season or when triggered by other season specific allergens.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Itching, watery eyes.
- Frequent sneezing; stuffy nose with a clear discharge.
- Itching in the roof of the mouth.
- Wheezing (sometimes).
- Burning in the throat.

CAUSES

- The body's immune system produces antibodies that release a chemical called histamine. Histamine in turn produces swelling and irritation in certain areas (nose, sinuses, eyes).
- Allergens in the air that cause an allergic sensitivity include: Pollen (from weeds, flowers, grasses, and trees), mold, dust, mites, tobacco smoke, and other air pollutants.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

There is no way to prevent having allergies. You can take steps to help prevent having symptoms.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Symptoms can be controlled with treatment, but the condition persists over a lifetime. It is usually more troublesome than disabling.

MEDICATIONS

Your doctor recommends the following over-the-counter medications. These medications cannot cure your allergies but may offer significant symptomatic relief:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Antihistamines | <input type="checkbox"/> Decongestant Nasal Spray (Limit use to 3 days) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Decongestants | <input type="checkbox"/> Saline Nasal Spray or Nose Drops |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cough Suppressants (Such as Dextromethorphan) | <input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamine or Lubricant Eye Drops |

- Unless your doctor tells you differently, always finish the full course of your antibiotic and steroid prescriptions, even if you start to feel better.
- Antibiotics and steroids may interfere with the effectiveness of birth control pills. Use an alternative method of contraception for the remainder of the month after finishing your antibiotic or steroid prescription.

For severe or year-round cases, desensitization injections for known allergens may be suggested. Once allergens are known (through skin or blood tests), small amounts are injected over a period of time. This helps block the immune system from releasing the histamine. This process may take months or years for effective results.

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF

- Your symptoms continue to worsen despite the use of medication
- You develop a fever
- You notice creamy or dark-colored drainage from your sinuses
- Seek immediate medical treatment if you experience any difficulty breathing, chest pain or shortness of breath!