

ALLERGIES

“Allergy” means “changed activity”. It’s known as a hypersensitivity response and occurs when the body’s immune system reacts to the foreign substance through the skin, lungs, swallowing or injection; when the response is not necessary. It occurs more often in people with a family history of allergies.

Allergic reactions can be mild or serious and occur within seconds or minutes after exposure to the allergen, but some can occur after days or weeks. Anaphylaxis is a sudden and severe allergic reaction that occurs within minutes of exposure and can lead to anaphylactic shock and death within 15 minutes if medical intervention is not obtained.

CAUSES

- ∅ Plants
- ∅ Foods
- ∅ Medications
- ∅ Pollens
- ∅ Bee stings
- ∅ Bites

ALLERGIC RHINITIS (HAY FEVER)

SYMPTOMS THAT OCCUR AFTER EXPOSURE TO AIRBORNE POLLENS OF CERTAIN SEASONAL PLANTS. HAY FEVER INVOLVES AN ALLERGIC REACTION TO POLLEN. THE REACTION OCCURS WITH ALLERGY TO MOLDS, ANIMAL DANDER AND

DUST. POLLENS THAT ARE CARRIED BY THE WIND ARE SMALL AND MORE OFTEN CAUSE HAY FEVER. HOT, DRY AND WINDY DAYS ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE INCREASED AMOUNTS OF POLLEN IN THE AIR.

Signs & Symptoms

- Mucus product
- Itching of the
 - ▲ throat
 - ▲ nose
 - ▲ mouth
 - ▲ eyes
 - ▲ skin
- Coughing
- Headache
- Runny nose / sneezing
- Asthma / wheezing

TREATMENT:

- Avoidance is the best treatment.
- Antihistamines often provide good relief of mild to moderate symptoms.
- Decongestants may also be helpful in reducing symptoms such as nasal congestion.

SELF MANAGEMENT

Here are some ways to lessen exposure to pollen and mold.

- ★ Keep windows closed at night to prevent pollen or mold from drifting into your house. If possible, use air conditioner to clean, cool and dry the air.
- ★ Wear a dust mask when mowing the lawn, raking leaves or gardening, and take appropriate medication before hand.
- ★ Don't take more medication than recommended in an attempt to lessen your symptoms.

- ✦ Don't over water indoor plants if you are allergic to mold. Wet soil encourages mold to grow.
- ✦ Keep car windows closed when travelling.
- ✦ Take a vacation to a more pollen-free area, such as the beach or sea.

FOOD ALLERGY

Symptoms that develop because of an immune response and triggered by certain foods. Food allergies may resemble other conditions:

- ☞ food intolerance
- ☞ irritable bowel syndrome
- ☞ physical stress
- ☞ food poisoning

Once an allergy has developed, strict avoidance of the offending food usually prevents further problems.

SYMPTOMS:

- ‡ scratchy throat
- ‡ anaphylaxis (which may result in death)
- ‡ abdominal pain
- ‡ nausea
- ‡ vomiting
- ‡ stomach cramps
- ‡ itching of the mouth, throat, eyes, skin
- ‡ hives / urticaria
- ‡ angioedema of the eyelids, lips
- ‡ nasal congestion / runny nose
- ‡ shortness of breath / wheezing

TREATMENT:

The goals of treatment are reduction of symptoms and avoidance of future allergic reactions. Mild symptoms may require no treatment. The symptoms will subside in a short time. Soothing skin creams may provide some relief for rashes. Severe symptoms may require treatment with corticosteroids

SELF MANAGEMENT

- ☑ Avoid the food you are allergic to.
- ☑ When eating outside, ask about the ingredients to avoid eating a 'hidden' food allergen.
- ☑ Read food labels and to become familiar with technical or scientific terms for foods. (e.g. milk may be replaced or list as casein, a milk protein, etc.)
- ☑ Be prepared for emergency. Anaphylactic reactions caused by food allergies can be potentially life-threatening.
- ☑ Wear an identification bracelet that describes the allergy.

DRUG ALLERGIES

Drug allergies are caused by hypersensitivity of the immune system. The body becomes sensitized by the first exposure to the medication. The second or subsequent exposure causes an immune response. Reaction range from irritating or mild (skin rashes, hives, nausea) side effects to allergic responses including life-threatening anaphylaxis.

Penicillin and related antibiotics are the most common cause of drug allergies. Avoiding these medication is the best way to prevent an allergic reaction.

Prevention

- Observe your children carefully after introducing a new food or medication
- A medical ID-tag should be worn by people who know that they have a serious allergic reaction

SYMPTOMS:

- 🚫 hives
- 🚫 skin rash
- 🚫 itching of the skin or eyes
- 🚫 wheezing
- 🚫 swelling of the lips

SYMPTOMS OF ANAPHYLAXIS INCLUDE:

- 🚫 nasal congestion
- 🚫 difficulty in breathing
- 🚫 cough
- 🚫 blueness of the skin, including the lips or nail beds
- 🚫 dizziness

- ☒ confusion
- ☒ abdominal pain/cramps
- ☒ nausea, vomiting
- ☒ diarrhoea

TREATMENT:

The treatment goal is the relief of symptoms. Antihistamines usually relieve common symptoms (rash, hives, itching). Oral or topical corticosteroids (applied to a localized area of the skin) may also be recommended.

ALLERGIC CONJUNCTIVITIS

Non-infectious allergic conjunctivitis is a reaction to the introduction of materials such as pollen. Reddening of the eyes develops quickly and is accompanied by itching and tearing.

SYMPTOMS:

- ☒ red eye(s)
- ☒ large dilated vessels in the sclera
- ☒ intense itching – burning eyes
- ☒ tearing
- ☒ puffy eyelids

TREATMENT:

THE BEST TREATMENT IS TO AVOIDING EXPOSURE TO SPECIFIC ALLERGENS. APPLYING COOL COMPRESSES ON THE EYES OR TAKING ANTIHISTAMINE PREPARATIONS CAN RELIEVE DISCOMFORT.

SELF MANAGEMENT

- ✿ Do try to stay at home when the pollen count or humidity is reported to be higher or on windy days.
- ✿ Do take medications prescribed by your doctor in the recommended dosage.
- ✿ Keep car windows closed when travelling.
- ✿ Keep your hands away from your eyes.
- ✿ Discard eye cosmetics and replace/ disinfect contact lenses.
- ✿ Apply cool compress to ease the discomfort.

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