



ALLERGIES AND ALLERGIC REACTIONS

Allergies occur when the **immune system** identifies and **reacts** to a **foreign substance** such as food, **environmental allergens** (*pollen, pet dander, insect venom*) and **medications**.

Listed below are different types of allergies and the symptoms they can cause.



Allergic rhinitis

(aka: hayfever, **seasonal allergies**, **pollen** allergy, **pet** allergy, etc.)

- **Sneezing**
- **Itching** of the nose, eyes or roof of the mouth
- Runny, **stuffy nose**
- Watery, red or **swollen eyes** (conjunctivitis)

Drug Allergy

(commonly caused by antibiotics like **penicillins** or **sulfa** drugs, but could be any medication)

- **Hives**, rash
- Itchy skin
- **Facial swelling**
- Wheezing
- **Anaphylaxis**

Treatment of minor symptoms

- **Antihistamines** (like Claritin, Zyrtec, Allegra, or Benadryl)
- **Decongestants** (like Afrin or Sudafed)
- **Ice** and **topical creams** that contain corticosteroids (like hydrocortisone ointment)

Food Allergy

(common causes are **peanuts** or tree nuts, **shellfish**, milk, eggs, soy)

- **Tingling** in the mouth
- **Swelling** of the lips, tongue, face or throat
- Hives
- **Anaphylaxis**

Insect Sting Allergy

(commonly caused by **bees**)

- A large area of **swelling** (edema) at the sting site
- **Itching or hives** all over the body
- Cough, **chest tightness**, **wheezing** or shortness of breath
- **Anaphylaxis**

If someone you know is experiencing **anaphylaxis**:

- **Call 911 immediately.**
- See if they have an (**EpiPen**), epinephrine (adrenaline) auto-injector, help them if needed.
- Keep the person **calm**.
- Lie them on their **back**.
- **Raise their feet** about 12 inches and cover them with a blanket.
- **Turn them on their side** if they are vomiting or bleeding.
- Make sure their **clothing is loose so they can breathe.**

THE SOONER THE PERSON GETS THEIR EPINEPHRINE, THE BETTER.

Atopic dermatitis

An allergic skin condition also called **eczema**, causes skin to:

- Itch
- Redden
- Flake or peel

Anaphylaxis

- **Facial swelling**
- Severe shortness of breath, wheezing, **difficulty breathing**
- **Skin rash**, itching, or pale skin
- A drop in blood pressure, causing:
- Lightheadedness, **dizziness**
- **Fainting** or loss of consciousness
- A **rapid, weak pulse**
- Nausea and vomiting

Check out the latest updates and details from **the Mayo Clinic:**



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