

Allergic Rhinitis Triggers

Seasonal allergic rhinitis, commonly known as hay fever, is triggered by outdoor allergens such as pollen and mold spores. Some people have symptoms year-round due to indoor allergens from pets, mold, dust mites and cockroach residue. This is called perennial allergic rhinitis. You can suffer from either seasonal or perennial allergic rhinitis, or a combination of both.

Pollen



Pet dander



Dust Mites



Mold



Cockroach



Diagnosis of Allergic Rhinitis

A physician trained in allergy, often referred to as an allergist, has specialized training and experience to determine which allergens, if any, are causing your symptoms. Your physician will take a detailed health history, perform a physical exam and then most likely test you for allergies. Skin tests show the results within 20 minutes. These results, as well as how frequent and bad your symptoms are, will be considered when developing a treatment plan. Steps to manage your symptoms may include avoiding the allergens you are allergic to, medications or allergy immunotherapy (allergy shots).

Treatment and Management of Allergic Rhinitis

The first step to manage this condition is to avoid allergens that cause symptoms. For instance, if you are allergic to dust mites, it is important to take steps to prevent exposure to dust mites, such as frequently washing bed linens in hot water. The same is true for outdoor allergens. Limiting your exposure during times of high pollen and mold counts may help reduce symptoms.

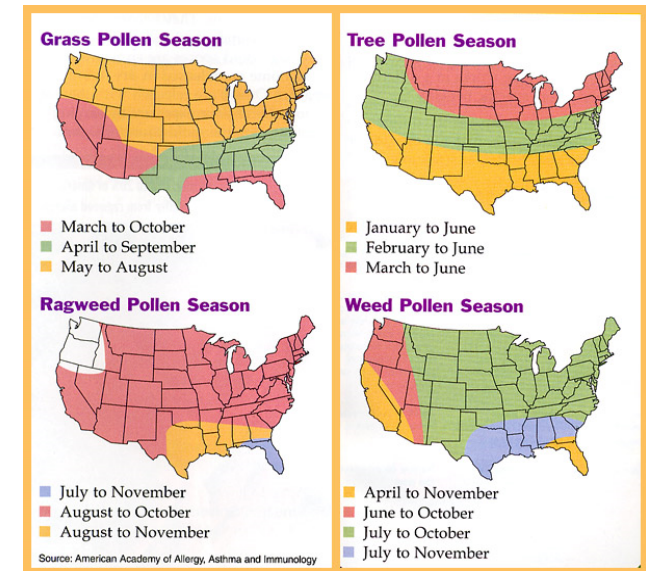
Sometimes taking steps to avoid allergens isn't possible or it isn't enough to control allergic rhinitis symptoms. That is when your allergist may suggest allergy immunotherapy or recommend medications to control inflammation and prevent symptoms.

Nasal corticosteroid sprays control inflammation and reduce all symptoms of allergic rhinitis, including itching, sneezing, runny nose and stuffiness. Antihistamines in the form of liquid, pills or nasal sprays block histamine and may relieve itching, sneezing and runny nose. But they may not be as effective in reducing nasal stuffiness.

Decongestant pills or nasal sprays can be used as needed if nasal stuffiness is not relieved with other medications. Decongestant nasal sprays should not be used more than three days because they can cause your congestion to return and worsen. Ipratropium nasal spray can be used specifically for a runny nose.

Even though some of these medications are available over-the-counter, you should still work with your allergist to discover what medications work best for you.

Your physician may also recommend allergy immunotherapy, also known as allergy shots. This treatment involves receiving injections typically over a period of three to five years. They have been proven effective in decreasing sensitivity to allergens sometimes permanently.





Allergic rhinitis is caused by allergens like mold, pollen and animals. These are substances which are usually harmless but can cause allergic reactions in certain people.

Allergy symptoms are the result of a chain reaction that starts in the immune system. Your immune system controls how your body defends itself. For instance, if you have an allergy to pollen, your immune system identifies pollen as an invader or allergen. Your immune system overreacts by producing antibodies called immunoglobulins E (IgE). These antibodies travel to cells that release histamine and other chemicals, causing an allergic reaction with symptoms such as sneezing, stuffiness, a runny nose, itching and post nasal drip.

People with allergic rhinitis are also prone to itchy, watery eyes (from allergic conjunctivitis or eye allergies), and they may be more sensitive to irritants such as smoke, perfume or cold, dry air. Rhinitis can contribute to other problems such as asthma, sinus or ear conditions, or trouble sleeping.

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