

COCKROACHES

Cockroaches are one of the most common and allergenic of indoor pests. These pests are common even in the cleanest of crowded urban areas and older dwellings. They are found in all types of neighborhoods. The proteins found in cockroach saliva are particularly allergenic but the body and droppings of cockroaches also contain allergenic proteins.

These pests adapt easily to a variety of environments. They prefer warm conditions found most often in buildings. They are mainly active at night and will run away from light.

Interesting Facts!

- Cockroaches have at least **18** knees!
- Cockroaches can hold their breath for **40** minutes!
- Cockroaches can live **1** week without a head!
- Young cockroaches only need a crack the width of **.55mm** to fit. (That's the width of a dime!)



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**COCKROACH
ALLERGY**



What Is a Cockroach Allergy?

Cockroaches contain a protein that is an *allergen* for many people. An allergen is a substance that causes an allergic immune reaction. The body parts, saliva and waste of cockroaches are allergens. Even dead cockroaches can cause allergic reactions.

What Are the Symptoms of Cockroach Allergy?

- Common cockroach allergy symptoms include:
- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Itchy, red or watery eyes
- Stuffy nose
- Itchy nose, mouth or throat
- Postnasal drip (a flow of mucus from behind your nose into your throat)
- Cough
- Itchy skin or skin rash

How Do Doctors Diagnose a Cockroach Allergy?

To diagnose a cockroach allergy, your doctor may give you a physical exam and discuss your symptoms. If your doctor thinks you have a cockroach allergy, he or she may suggest a skin prick test or a specific IgE blood test. If you have symptoms year-round, you could have a cockroach allergy.

How Can I Avoid Cockroach Exposure?

Avoid exposure to cockroaches and their droppings. Pests need food, water and shelter to survive. There are changes you can make to your home to reduce the numbers of these unwanted “guests”:

- **Cover all trash cans tightly.**
- **Store food in airtight containers.** This includes food kept in cabinets and on counters.
- **Clean all dirty dishes.** Do not leave them in the sink or on the counter.
- **Sweep up any food crumbs from the counters, stove top, tables and floor.** Wipe up any spills. Vacuum and mop floors regularly.
- **Avoid leaving pet food out in a bowl.** Clean the bowl regularly, like other dirty dishes.
- **Fix leaky pipes under sinks and in the basement.** Cockroaches like damp places.
- **Seal cracks in the walls and floors** where cockroaches can enter your home.
- **Use cockroach baits and traps.** Don't use sprays. They can irritate allergies and asthma.



What Is the Treatment for Cockroach Allergy?

The most important step is to avoid cockroaches as much as possible. Limiting your exposure to cockroaches will reduce your symptoms. However, you may also need medicines to control allergy symptoms.

Certain over-the-counter and prescription medicines may help reduce cockroach allergy symptoms. Talk to your doctor about what medications may be right for you.

Some people with a cockroach allergy do not get complete relief from the combination of cockroach avoidance actions and medicines. In some cases, your allergist may consider immunotherapy (allergy shots). Immunotherapy is a long-term treatment that can help prevent or reduce the severity of allergic reactions. It can change the course of allergic disease by reducing the body's immune response to allergens.