



Allergies and Kids



Forty to fifty million people in the United States have some kind of allergy. Children of a parent with allergies are more likely to have allergies. Allergies can begin at any age.

What Is an Allergy?

When a person is very sensitive to certain things, he/she has an allergy.

Some things that cause allergies:

Tree, grass, ragweed, and other weed pollen

Mold spores and dust mites

Insect bites

Cockroaches and animal dander

Chemicals like perfume or pesticides

Foods such as shellfish, peanuts, milk, eggs, and soy

Medicines

Latex, like gloves in the hospital

Allergic Reaction

An allergic reaction happens when your body reacts strongly to a substance or something you are allergic to. Severe allergic reactions can even be deadly.

Allergies can cause:

Sneezing

Runny nose

Itching

Swelling

Watery eyes

Skin redness or rashes

Your doctor may do allergy testing. Allergy testing is done on the skin to find out what is causing the allergic reaction.



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Identifying Allergies

The first step is to figure out if your child has allergies. Your doctor will take a history of your child's symptoms. Skin tests or blood tests may also be useful.

Treatment options may include:

Oral and nasal antihistamines – decrease runny or stuffy nose

Decongestants and nasal steroids – decrease stuffy nose

Immunotherapy or "allergy shots"

Life-threatening Allergy — Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction. It could be life-threatening. Common causes of anaphylaxis are foods (particularly peanuts, tree nuts, and shellfish), medicines, stinging insects, dyes used during certain X-rays, and latex.

If your child has a severe reaction, make sure your doctor knows. Your doctor may prescribe a special medicine called epinephrine (auto-injector). This medicine is used right away for a severe reaction (anaphylaxis). Go to the nearest hospital as soon as possible.

**Help your child live a full and healthy life!
Don't let allergies get in the way.**

References

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