

HealthyActions

Achieving Your Goals for Healthy Living



Allergy Testing & Treatment



If you react to certain foods, liquids, pollen, insect bites, or animals, etc. you have an *allergy*. Allergies can make you:

- Sneeze
- Itch
- Have swelling, skin redness, or rashes.

Symptoms are different for each person.

One kind of allergic reaction is called *rhinitis*. This is when there is swelling inside of your nose. Your nose may begin to run and itch. You may sneeze. Your eyes may water and itch as well. Your nose may be stuffy.

Allergies can be seasonal in the spring, early summer and fall. Or they can be present all the time. If you are suffering with allergies, talk to your doctor.

Your doctor can test you to find out if you have an allergy.

You need to talk about:

Your medical history

Your symptoms

When you have symptoms

Your doctor will give you skin and blood tests to find out what is causing your allergies. Allergy testing is done on the skin to discover the material or substance that is triggering the allergic reaction.



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Once you and your doctor know what you are allergic to, you can make a plan. Your plan will help you avoid or work around the cause. When you cannot avoid the cause, your doctor may treat you with medicine.

Another answer may be allergy shots. In the beginning, allergy shots are given once or twice a week. The next cycle shots are generally given every 2 to 4 weeks. This may last 3 to 5 years. The goal is to lessen your sensitivity to the allergen.

Allergy shots are also used for some patients with stinging insect allergy. Allergy shots are not used for food allergies.

Not all patients need allergy shots. Talk with your doctor about:

How to avoid the cause

How bad your symptoms are and how long they last

How your medicine works for you

Don't let your nose get the best of you! You can live well with allergies and rhinitis. Follow your doctor's advice and be prepared.

Reference

American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. Available at: www.acaai.org/public/advice/Allergy+Testing.htm

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