

House dust mites

- DO**
Eliminate mite reservoirs: Wrap your pillows and mattress in allergy-proof covers. Wash bedding weekly (140° F or 60° C)
Remove carpets, feather/down bedding and pillows, stuffed animals
Reduce upholstered furniture to a minimum
Keep humidity 25-45%
Use air conditioner and dehumidifier. Use air filtration measures:
1. Portable HEPA filters 2. Vacuum cleaning
3. Exposure to heat or cold

Avoid

Too-tight houses (use outdoor ventilation in spring and fall)

Pollen

- DO**
Close windows and doors
Wear loose, light clothing outdoors; shower, change, and wash clothes in hot water after each use
Vacation away during peak pollen season
Use air conditioning

Avoid

Using fans
Flowers indoors, direct contact with plants (e.g., weeding)
Going outdoors on hot, dry days

Indoor fungi

- DO**
Keep humidity at 25-45%. Clean surface with mould inhibitors/chlorine bleach
Let window/car air conditioner run at full blast 3-5 minutes with window open when first turned on
Vent clothes dryers, stoves, and bathrooms to outdoors
Ventilate closets (use incandescent light bulbs)
Empty and clean garbage cans frequently

Avoid

Leaks, old wallpaper
Basements
Old books, poorly ventilated - and poor air-conditioned libraries

Animal dander

- DO**
Clean fanatically as dog dander can get everywhere
Remove carpets, too much furniture
Filter air
Keep animal out of bedroom

Avoid

Keep distance from the animal
Be wary of visitors who own animals
Keeping a pet

Mould

- DO**
Allergy bedding covers
Filter facemasks
Open windows and close internal kitchen and bathroom doors when cooking, showering or bathing
Keep houseplants to a minimum
Remove piles of old newspaper

Avoid

Do not spend time in buildings where hay or grain is stored
Do not go into damp and musty buildings
Do not walk in mild damp conditions or among rotting leaves
Outdoor activities at sunset
Sleeping/camping out



ALLERGY & IMMUNO THERAPY CLINIC
ADVANCED LUNG
CARE CENTRE (ALCC)
(A venture of Unik Klinical Research Pvt. Ltd.)

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**Allergic
rhinitis**

**ALLERGY & IMMUNO THERAPY
CLINIC**



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Allergy facts

- 01 Allergy involves an exaggerated response of the immune system, often to common substances such as foods, house dust mites or pollen.
- 02 The Immune system is an intricate system that defends the body against foreign invaders like bacteria or viruses.
- 03 Allergens are substances that are foreign to the body, normally not harmful but can cause an overreaction in allergic patients.
- 04 Immunoglobulin E (IgE) is the antibody that triggers the allergic reaction.
- 05 Allergies cannot only develop at any age, but many individuals also outgrow allergies over time.
- 06 While environment plays a role in allergy development, there is a greater risk of developing allergic conditions if a person has a family history of allergy, especially in parents or siblings.

What is an allergy?

An allergy refers to an exaggerated reaction by our immune system in response to exposure to certain foreign substances. It is exaggerated because these foreign substances are usually seen by the body as harmless and no response occurs in non-allergic people. In allergic individuals, the body recognizes the foreign substance as harmful and one arm of the immune system generates a response.

What causes an allergy?

Allergy-producing substances are called "allergens." Examples of allergens include house dust mites, pollens, moulds, animal proteins, foods, and even medications.

To understand the language of allergy, it is important to remember that allergens are substances that are foreign to the body and can cause an allergic reaction in certain people. When an allergic individual comes in contact with an allergen, the immune system mounts a response through the IgE antibody. Therefore, people who are prone to allergies are said to be allergic or "atopic."

What is allergic rhinitis?

Allergic rhinitis is defined as allergic symptoms in the nasal passage. Allergic rhinitis can be seasonal (occurring during specific seasons) or perennial (occurring year-round).

The allergens that most commonly cause seasonal allergic rhinitis include pollens from trees, grasses, and weeds, as well as spores from fungi and moulds. The allergens that most commonly cause perennial allergic rhinitis are house dust mites, cockroaches, animal dander, and fungi or moulds. Perennial allergic rhinitis tends to be more difficult to treat.

How does allergic rhinitis occur?

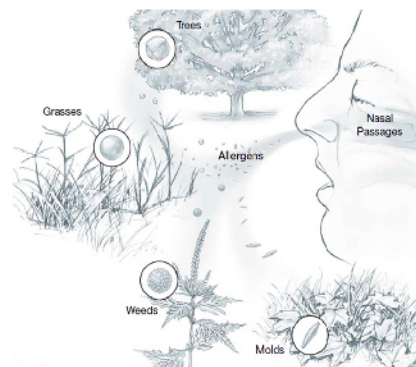
This condition occurs when allergens (allergy-causing substances) come into contact with the nose, and usually also the ears, sinuses and the throat.

When allergens come in contact with the lining of the nose and sinuses, they trigger the cells to release the chemical histamine, which causes the allergy symptoms described below.

What are the symptoms?

- 01 Nasal congestion
- 02 Sneezing
- 03 Watery "runny nose"
- 04 Itchy eyes, nose, or throat
- 05 Puffy eyes or "allergic shiners"
- 06 Post nasal drip
- 07 Tears

These symptoms may occur during a certain season or year-long. They can occur at any age.



How does allergic rhinitis differ from a cold or flu?

Allergic rhinitis lasts longer than a cold or flu, up to several weeks, and does not cause fever. The nasal discharge from allergic rhinitis is thin, watery and clear, while nasal discharge from a cold or flu tends to be thicker. Itching (mostly eyes, nose, mouth, throat and skin) is common with allergic rhinitis but not with a cold or flu. Sneezing is more prominent with allergic rhinitis and can occur in rather severe form.

What are the most common allergens?

- 01 House dust mite
- 02 Pollen from trees, grass and weeds
- 03 Mould
- 04 Animal dander

How will I know what I am allergic to?

Your doctor will do a physical exam and will ask you about your symptoms and when they occur. Your doctor may also want to perform an allergy skin test to help determine exactly what is causing your allergy. An allergy skin test puts tiny amounts of allergens onto your skin to see which ones you react to.

Skin prick test

The skin prick test involves:

- 01 Placing a small amount of substances that may be causing your symptoms on the skin, most often on the forearm, only in exceptional cases the skin of the prostrate back can be used as an alternative.
- 02 The skin is then pricked so the allergen goes under the skin's surface.
- 03 The healthcare provider closely watches the skin for swelling and redness or other signs of a reaction. Results are usually seen within 15 to 20 minutes.

Once you know which allergens you are allergic to, your doctor can decide what is the optimal treatment for you. Your doctor may also decide to do a blood test.

What is the treatment for allergic rhinitis?

A number of medications, including antihistamines, intranasal corticosteroids, and decongestants are available to control symptoms. Allergen immunotherapy consists of a series of allergy shots that help prevent or decrease allergic reactions.

Allergen immunotherapy could provide long-lasting benefit. You can "train" your immune system not to react exaggeratedly to an allergen anymore. This is done through a series of allergy shots called immunotherapy. One to two weekly shots expose you to very small doses of the allergen, that causes an allergic reaction. The dose is gradually increased, usually during a three-to-six-months period. Maintenance shots are needed every four weeks for three to five years. Immunotherapy is usually used when other treatments like antisympomatic medication are not satisfactory.

What preventive measures can you take?

The best way to treat seasonal allergic rhinitis is to prevent attacks by reducing exposure to allergens. There are several ways to reduce exposure:

- 01 Keep windows and doors closed and air conditioning on at home and in the car during allergy season. Avoid using fans that draw in outside air.
- 02 Run a dehumidifier to keep humidity low.
- 03 Stay indoors when possible and minimize outdoor activity during peak pollen periods.
- 04 Avoid contact with freshly cut grass.
- 05 Shower or bathe and change clothing after outdoor activities.
- 06 Dry clothes in a dryer; do not hang clothes outside to dry, if possible in a separate room.