

Allergic Rhinitis

Allergic rhinitis, commonly called “allergies” or “hayfever”, is an inflammatory reaction in the upper airways that wreaks havoc on the eyes, ears, nose, and throat. Allergy symptoms in the eyes can lead to itching, tearing, redness, burning, puffiness, and dark circles under the eyes. Ear symptoms commonly include itching, stuffiness, pressure or pain, popping/crackling and diminished hearing. Nasal symptoms are common in many people and include itching, sneezing, sniffing, runny nose (usually clear), stuffiness, and possibly a decreased sense of smell. Throat symptoms may include itching, scratchiness, pain, hoarseness or frequent throat clearing. Ear infections in children and sinus infections in adults and children often result from poorly controlled allergies.

Allergy symptoms may occur during certain seasons or all year round. Seasonal symptoms are usually caused by pollen while year round symptoms can be triggered by dust mites, cockroaches, molds, or indoor pets.

Over-the-counter medications such as antihistamines and decongestants may help some allergy sufferers. Allergic rhinitis is diagnosed with a skin test or blood test. These tests are usually performed by an allergy specialist. The specialist may offer effective prescription medicine and recommend strategies for avoiding particular triggers.

Resources:

Patient and Consumer information – American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (AAAAI)

www.aaaai.org/patients/search_allergic_conditions.stm

2001 ARIA Guidelines – Allergic Rhinitis and its Impact on Asthma

Bousquet J et al, Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology 2001; 108(5):S147-334.

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA)

www.aafa.org/display.cfm?id=9