

Understanding and Coping with Nasal Allergies

Developed by the American Pharmacists Association. Improving medication use. Advancing patient care.

Do you have a nasal allergy? This checklist may help you find out.

Nasal allergies cause the lining of your nose to become swollen and inflamed. Do you have:

- A runny nose with a thin, watery discharge?
- Nasal itching and congestion?
- Red, itching eyes?
- Sneezing?
- Drainage from your nose down the back of your throat?

If so, then you may be a nasal allergy sufferer. Your pharmacist can help you decide whether to see a doctor or whether to treat your symptoms yourself.

Perennial, seasonal, or both? The next question to ask yourself.

Many different triggers can cause nasal allergies.

Perennial Triggers	Seasonal Triggers
Do these triggers start your symptoms? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dust mites• Animal hair or dander• Indoor mold Because these triggers are present all the time, these allergies are said to be perennial.	Or do these? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pollen from trees• Ragweed• Grass• Weeds Because these triggers are around only during certain times of the year, these allergies are said to be seasonal.

A few people suffer from both perennial and seasonal allergies. They may have symptoms all year round, but they tend to be worse during certain seasons.

Nasal allergies aren't serious, are they?

Many people mistake nasal allergies for a trivial disease. In truth, the symptoms can have a powerful effect for the one in five Americans who suffer from them. They can make the quality of your life worse by causing tiredness, headache, and changes in your ability to think and function well. What's worse, many of the available medications can cause drowsiness and make it hard for you to perform everyday tasks.

How do I avoid the triggers that cause my nasal allergies?

Avoiding triggers entirely probably is not possible. But you can do a number of things to minimize them. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about specific products—such as filters and bedding covers—that can help you clear your environment of triggers. These tips may also give you some relief:

- If you have seasonal allergies, stay inside and use the air conditioner or other air-filtering system as much as possible during allergy season.
- If you are allergic to animal dander and have pets, keep them outside your house. If this is not possible, don't let them into your bedroom.
- If mold triggers your allergies, use kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans and dehumidifiers elsewhere in the house to keep the humidity inside your home low. High humidity allows mold to grow. Piles of newspapers can harbor mold, so recycle them promptly.
- No matter what triggers your nasal allergy, avoid being around tobacco smoke. Tobacco smoke may irritate the lining of your nose, increase your risk of infection, and make your symptoms worse. If you smoke, try to quit. If other members of your family smoke, ask them to stop or to smoke only outdoors.

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How can I control my symptoms?

Seasonal and perennial nasal allergies can be treated effectively using medications. Many are available without a prescription. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist to determine which one of these is best for you.

Medication	How it might help	What to keep in mind
Antihistamines come as <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oral medications (taken by mouth)• Nasal sprays	Reduces itching, sneezing, eye irritation, and runny nose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not effective for nasal congestion.• May cause drowsiness.• Antihistamine nasal sprays may leave a bad taste in the mouth.
Decongestants come as <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oral medications (taken by mouth)• Nasal sprays	Reduces nasal congestion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can cause difficulty sleeping, loss of appetite, or excessive nervousness.• Decongestant nasal sprays may temporarily reduce nasal congestion but can cause even more severe congestion if used for more than 3 to 5 days or more often than recommended.• People with high blood pressure and heart problems should check with their doctor before using decongestants.
Cromolyn sodium nasal spray	Effective in some people for controlling symptoms of nasal allergies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works only if used before nasal symptoms appear.• Won't work during an active allergy attack.
Corticosteroid nasal spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highly effective treatment of nasal allergies.• Used as the primary preventive treatment for patients with moderate to severe allergies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May cause nasal dryness. (New therapies that may not have this side effect are now available.)• As an oral medication, can be taken over the short term (3 to 7 days) for treatment of severe symptoms.

How can I tell if I should see a doctor?

If you have tried to treat your nasal allergies with over-the-counter medications but aren't getting any relief after 2 or 3 days—or if you are getting worse—call your doctor. Call your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms because they could indicate that you have a more serious condition such as an infection:

- Fever of 102°F lasting more than 2 days
- Discolored nasal discharge
- Frequent, severe headaches or facial pain
- Ear pain
- A severe sore throat
- Diarrhea lasting more than 2 days
- Vomiting lasting more than 12 hours
- Wheezing (noisy or difficult breathing)

More Information

For more information on nasal allergies, try these resources:

- Call toll free 1-877-882-1020
- Visit www.RhinocortAqua.com