

700 Children's Drive
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nationwidechildrens.org

ALLERGIC RHINITIS

Allergic rhinitis (rie-NIE-tis) is a condition commonly known as hay fever. It affects millions of people in the United States. There are two types of allergic rhinitis: *seasonal* (occurs during a season) and *perennial* (occurs year around).

SEASONAL ALLERGIC RHINITIS

Seasonal allergic rhinitis is the most common type. It usually occurs in the spring, summer, and fall when the child is around mold, grass, trees, and weeds. The child's symptoms usually improve when the weather turns cold, or after the first frost.

PERENNIAL ALLERGIC RHINITIS

Perennial allergic rhinitis occurs all during the year. Often the child's symptoms are caused by breathing things found indoors, such as dust, feathers, mold, or animal dander.

SIGNS OF ALLERGIC RHINITIS

If your child has allergic rhinitis, you will notice some or all of these symptoms:

- Itchy, runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Frequent sneezing
- Mouth-breathing or snoring
- Headaches
- Nosebleeds
- Some loss of smell
- Red, puffy, itchy eye
- Ears "popping"
- Coughing spells (especially at night) caused by large amounts of drainage from the nose
- Frequent ear infections
- Dark circles under the eyes (allergic "shiners")

TESTING FOR ALLERGIC RHINITIS

- The doctor will have the nurse put some allergy skin tests on your child's back. This will help the doctor decide if the child is allergic to certain things. (Refer to the Helping Hand, *Allergy Testing*, HH-III-74.)
- Your doctor will discuss the results of these tests with you.



TREATMENT

- If the tests show that your child has an allergy, avoid as much as possible the things your child is allergic to (Picture 1).
- Your doctor may prescribe medicines which may include an antihistamine, decongestant, and a nose spray (Picture 2). It is very important that your child takes this medicine exactly as ordered.
- The doctor may start your child on allergy shots. It is important that your child gets the shots on a regular basis.



WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

Call the doctor if:

- Your child's symptoms do not improve or if they become worse, even when he is taking the medicine regularly.
- The medicine makes your child very drowsy (sleepy) or more active than usual.
- Your child develops a fever or headache.
- If the nose drainage is more frequent, thick, or becomes yellow or greenish in color. (This could mean a sinus infection.)

Picture 2 If your doctor prescribes nose spray, have your child use it as instructed.

If you have any questions, please call the Children's Hospital Allergy Clinic at (614) 722-5500 or
