

**ALLERGIC RHINITIS (HAY FEVER)**

Allergic rhinitis (hay fever) is an allergic response to airborne allergens which affect the eyes, nose, sinuses, throat, and bronchial airways in the lungs. The name "hay fever" is confusing, and "seasonal allergies" would probably be more appropriate. The body's immune system releases a chemical called histamine, which produces swelling and irritation in sensitive areas like the nose, sinuses and eyes. Airborne allergens causing an allergic sensitivity include: pollen from weeds, flowers, grasses and trees; mold; dust; mites; tobacco smoke; and other air pollutants.

The frequent signs and symptoms are: itching, watery eyes; frequent sneezing; stuffy nose with a clear discharge; itching in the roof of the mouth; occasional wheezing and, burning in the throat. Often there is a medical history of allergic reactions, such as eczema or asthma; and a family history of allergies. This condition persists over a lifetime, but is usually more troublesome than disabling. There seems to be an increased susceptibility to upper respiratory infections.

Some environmental control measures should be implemented: attempt to keep the furniture, rugs, drapes and curtains as dust free as possible; clean the walls, woodwork and floors with a damp mop; wax the floors; cover the box springs, mattress and pillows with plastic covers; use bedclothes that can be washed often, such as cotton sheets, washable mattress pads and synthetic fiber blankets. Don't use chenille bedspreads, quilts or comforters. Use wood or plastic chairs. Don't use stuffed chairs. Dust daily. Keep windows and doors closed as much as possible. Don't handle objects that are very dusty, such as books or stored clothing. Don't keep stuffed animals or toys in the house. Remove all pets from the house. Wear a filter face mask during exposure to allergens, including during housecleaning. Install an air-purification in your home's heating and air-conditioning system, preferably with a high efficiency filter(HEPA). Drive in an air-conditioned car. Have someone else mow the lawn.

To reduce the body's allergic response, you can use antihistamines, decongestants, eye drops, nasal sprays. These should be prescribed for you by your doctor. As always be sure to consult with the University Health clinic for treatment or questions.

We at the Health Center will be happy to help you.



**Healthfully yours,**

**Dr. Healthberry**

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For questions or comments you can;

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