

Allergies

An allergy occurs when the body reacts to a substance. This may cause a mild to severe problem. There are different kinds of allergies. The most common allergies are to:

- Things in the air such as pollen, mold, pet dander, or dust
- Things you touch such as metal, latex, or chemicals
- Foods you eat or drink such as eggs, peanuts, nuts, milk, soy, wheat, or shellfish
- Insect stings, such as from yellow jackets, bees, wasps, hornets, or ants
- Medicines, such as antibiotics

An allergy cannot be cured, but treatment can help you feel better. The best plan is to avoid the substances that make your symptoms, or signs, worse.



Symptoms

The most common symptoms of allergies are itchy, runny, or stuffy nose, hives, or skin rashes. More severe allergy symptoms are swelling, wheezing or trouble breathing. If you have trouble breathing, call 911.

Other symptoms depend on the cause of the allergy and may include:

- Itchy, runny, or stuffy nose
- Sinus pressure
- Sneezing
- Itchy, red, swollen, burning, or watery eyes
- Itchy throat or cough
- Less able to taste or smell
- Headaches
- Nausea or vomiting
- Abdominal pain or cramping
- Diarrhea
- Swelling around the mouth or trouble swallowing

Your Care

Your doctor will ask you about your symptoms. Skin or blood tests may be done to check for allergies. Your doctor may suggest over the counter or prescription medicines or injections to treat your symptoms.

Call your doctor if you have:

- Symptoms that get worse or keep you from doing your normal activities
- A fever over 101 degrees F or 38 degrees C

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.