

Allergies' causes, like solutions, vary

Q **uestion:** My allergies make me miserable. What can I do?

A **answer:** Allergy symptoms, such as sneezing, runny nose or itchy eyes, are the result of your immune system reacting to a substance, such as pollen or pet dander. These symptoms can be similar to a cold, although colds often are accompanied by fever and body aches. Allergy symptoms also typically are associated with clear nasal discharge rather than yellow or greenish discharge.



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ASK THE
EXPERT

Naturally, the best way to prevent allergy symptoms is to avoid the things that trigger a reaction. As examples, this means putting pillows in protective cases and avoiding carpets or pets.

Some medications can protect against allergy symptoms. Seasonal allergies or allergies triggered by

things in your household or environment can be treated with prescription nasal sprays or over-the-counter antihistamines. Salt-water rinses of the nose can help as well. If these don't work, your doctor may be able to prescribe or recommend other medications.

Allergy sufferers should see their physician if their symptoms interfere with activities or are not controlled with over-the-counter medications.

Keep in mind that some allergic reactions — such as to bee stings, certain foods (for example, nuts) or medications (for example, penicillin) — can be life threatening and require immediate medical assistance. This is due to swelling in the throat, which interferes with breathing. Individuals with these types of allergies often carry a special device called an EpiPen for injecting themselves in case of an allergic emergency.

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