

Allergies

Patient education

What are allergies?

Allergies occur when your body reacts to something that irritates it. This can happen as a result of something you eat, breathe in, or touch. Allergies frequently cause symptoms in the nose, eyes, skin, and stomach. They are classified as mild, moderate, or severe.

What can cause allergies?

- Pollen, car fumes, and mold
- Dust, smoke, mold, and pets
- Foods
- Medicines
- Perfume
- Bug bites

What increases the risks?

- Family history of allergies or asthma
- Having family members with allergies or asthma

How do I know that I have allergies?

Mild to moderate symptoms

- Sneezing, runny nose, or stuffy nose
- Itching in the mouth, ears, or throat
- Itchy, red, watery, or puffy eyes
- Sore throat
- Development of hives
- Cramps or bloating in the stomach

Severe symptoms

- You turn red
- Coughing or wheezing
- Lips, tongue, or mouth swelling
- Throat is tight or swollen
- Chest pain or tightness, as well as a rapid heartbeat
- Breathing difficulties or shortness of breath
- Pain in the abdomen, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Dizziness or fainting
- Very bad allergies to food, medicine, or bug bites may cause anaphylaxis. This can be life threatening

How is this treated?

If you have been diagnosed with allergies, please get help immediately if you are experiencing any severe symptoms.

- You may also need to use an EpiPen (epinephrine auto injector) – go to the Emergency Department right away if you use your EpiPen

For mild to moderate symptoms, treatments can include:

- Cold, wet cloths for itching and swelling
- Eye drops, nose sprays, or skin creams
- Washing out your nose each day
- Air purifier or HEPA filter
- Medicines
- A change to the foods you eat
- Allergy shots
- Sublingual immunotherapy

Where can I get more information?

Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology

Website: <https://csaci.ca/>

EpiPen.ca: homepage

Website: <https://www.epipen.ca/>

References: Allergies. (2021, June 07). Elsevier Inc: ClinicalKey for Nursing.

Retrieved from https://www.clinicalkey.com/nursing/#!/content/patient_handout/5-s2.0-pe_8d175f73-7c97-41c8-9be8-3991c42a095b