

# Allergic Rhinitis (Allergies)

Allergic rhinitis is a common reaction by the body's immune system to the environment or an allergen.

Seasonal rhinitis may also be referred to as Hay Fever or Allergies. Symptoms may be caused by indoor or outdoor allergens and often vary from season to season. Common allergens include pollen, mold, and pet dander.

## Symptoms

- Nasal congestion
- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Itching
- Itchy and/or watery eyes
- May follow a seasonal pattern

## Self-care measures

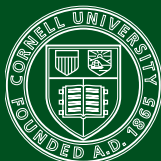
- Use oral antihistamines containing cetirizine, loratadine, or fexofenadine for runny nose, itching, and sneezing. Brand names include Zyrtec,<sup>®</sup> Claritin,<sup>®</sup> and Allegra.<sup>®</sup>
- Use non-prescription corticosteroid nasal sprays (Flonase<sup>®</sup> or Nasacort<sup>®</sup>). These are most effective when used daily.
- Use a product with a decongestant such as pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine for nasal congestion. (*Check with a pharmacist before using decongestants if you take stimulant medications and/or have a history of significant anxiety.*)
- Avoid known allergens.
- Stay indoors on dry, windy days.
- Remove clothes worn outside and shower to remove pollen from hair and skin.

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- Use the air conditioner when possible.
- Use a dehumidifier to keep indoor air dry.
- Use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter.

## **When to see a medical provider**

- If you are having any signs of a severe allergic reaction, such as swelling of the throat, loss of consciousness, dizziness (or lightheadedness), shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, skin rash, or a rapid or weak pulse.
- If you would like to be evaluated for allergies or get a prescription for allergy shots.

To make an appointment at Cornell Health, call 607-255-5155 during business hours, or go to myCornellHealth (from *health.cornell.edu*) and find a time that works for you.

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