



Allergic Rhinitis

What is Allergic Rhinitis?

Commonly known as hay fever, is caused by the nose and eyes coming in contact with environmental airborne allergens such as dust mite, pollens, animal dander and moulds.

What causes Allergic Rhinitis?

Allergic rhinitis develops when the body's immune system becomes sensitized and overreacts to something in the environment that typically causes no problems in most people.

What symptoms can you have?

Runny and itchy nose, sneezing and itchy watery eyes are usually the first symptoms, later followed by nasal blockage. These symptoms can easily be confused with an infection. Symptoms can be seasonal (pollens) or year around (often dust mite or moulds).

How is a diagnosis made?

If your symptoms do not affect your daily life (mild disease) and you respond to medical treatment you may refrain from testing. If your symptoms affect your daily life or symptoms are not controlled by standard medical treatment, allergy testing is recommended. This can be done with a simple blood test where allergic antibodies to common allergens like pollens can be measured in blood. Alternatively, a skin prick test can be performed where a droplet of allergen solution is put on the skin to see if a wheal reaction occurs.

How is Allergic Rhinitis treated?

Allergen avoidance is always the best option; however, this is often not possible. The best treatment for nasal symptoms is a nasal steroid spray. The dose of steroid is low, and it can be used long-term. If you have eye symptoms or the nasal spray is not controlling nasal symptoms, we recommend adding an anti-histamine tablet. It is important to understand that the treatment mentioned above does not cure allergy. For that you will need to go through a desensitisation treatment. Ask your doctor.

More information on Allergic Rhinitis:

<https://www.allergy.org.au/patients/allergic-rhinitis-hay-fever-and-sinusitis/allergic-rhinitis-or-hay-fever>