

ALLERGIC RHINITIS

Allergies can cause a wide range of symptoms including:

- Nasal congestion
- Itching of eyes, throat or skin
- Clear nasal drainage
- Plugging of the ears
- Decreased hearing
- Watering eyes
- Trouble swallowing or breathing
- Post-nasal drip

Treatment for allergic symptoms include:

- **Prevention:** avoiding exposure to the allergens that trigger your symptoms
 - Some examples:
 - Dust: consider a HEPA filtration system, removing carpet and drapes from the home
 - Outdoor pollens and grasses: HEPA filtration system, keep windows closed, stay indoors during peak pollen hours
 - Pet dander: do not let animals in the bedroom
- **Nasal saline sprays** (Ocean Spray, Xlear, etc.): rinses out allergens from the nose, moisturizes the nose, and reduces need for allergy medications
- **Nasal steroid sprays** (Flonase, Nasonex, Rhinocort)
 - First line treatment for adults (in children, not recommended to be used for longer than 6 months)
 - Treats the allergic reaction in the nose where it begins
 - Reduce nasal congestion / swelling
 - Can cause bloody noses: if this occurs, stop use for at least 2 weeks
- **Over the counter antihistamines** (Zyrtec, Allegra, Claritin)
- **Prescription medications** such as montelukast, azelastine, Dymista
- **Immunotherapy:** i.e. allergy shots, performed by an allergist

In some cases, a referral to an allergist may be made so that allergy testing (skin or blood test to determine what you are allergic to) can be performed.