Allergy Symptoms and Treatment

What is Allergic Rhinitis?
Allergic rhinitis is inflammation of the nose caused by an allergy. Most commonly known as Hay Fever, allergic rhinitis affects 20 to 40 million people in the United States each year.

Causes
Allergies result when the body's immune system reacts to substances that cause sensitivity. The most common causes of allergic reactions are:

- Pollen
- Dust
- Cat hair
- Mold spores
- Animal dander

People with a family history of eczema or asthma are more prone to allergic rhinitis.

Symptoms
Common symptoms include:

- Itchy, runny, congested nose.
- Sneezing, itchiness of throat, eyes, ears and roof of mouth.
- Post-nasal drip, which causes coughing and can make sleeping uncomfortable.

There are two types of allergic rhinitis:

Symptomatic - Allergies are triggered by things such as mold or dust.

Seasonal - Allergies are caused by things that are airborne such as grass or weed pollens.

Treatment
The best way to treat allergic rhinitis is to remove or avoid the offending agents. Self-care prevention and medication plans help relieve allergy symptoms.

Self Care Prevention Plan

- Keep windows closed, use your air conditioning in your car and home
- Vacuum regularly using a pollen filter
- Dust using a damp cloth (to eliminate house dust mites)
- Use hypoallergenic bed and pillow coverings
### Medication
There are several over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription medications approved to treat allergic rhinitis.

### Allergy Management
Allergic rhinitis is the cause of significant medical treatment costs, reduced work productivity and lost school days. Sometimes, it can be mistaken for a trivial disease, but it can greatly impact a person’s quality of life. Ask your doctor what is the most appropriate treatment for you and your situation.

#### OTC Medications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Side Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sneezing, post-nasal drip, itchy throat, eyes and ears</td>
<td><strong>Antihistamines</strong>: Alavert®, Claritin®, Benadryl®, Chlortrimeton®</td>
<td>May cause drowsiness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Combination Antihistamines</strong>: Claritin D, Tavist D, Chlortrimeton</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nasal congestion, sinus pain and pressure</td>
<td><strong>Decongestants</strong>: Actifed®, Sudafed®</td>
<td>May cause palpitations, insomnia, nervousness. Rebound is common</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congestion, sinus pain</td>
<td><strong>Nasal Decongestants</strong>: Afrin®, Neo-Synephrine®</td>
<td>If used more than 2-3 days, may cause “rebound” congestion and irritation of nasal passages. <em>Addiction potential if used more than 5 days</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Red, irritated eyes</td>
<td><strong>Eye Drops</strong>: Visine®, Naphcon®, Vasocon®</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stuffy or runny nose, sneezing</td>
<td><strong>Saline (salt water) Nose Drops</strong>: Salinex®, Ocean®</td>
<td>Very rare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Prescription Medications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Side Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nasal irritation, discomfort</td>
<td><strong>Oral Antihistamines</strong>: fexofenadine (generic available), Zyrtec®</td>
<td>May cause drowsiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nasal Steroids:</td>
<td>May cause local irritation, bitter taste</td>
<td>Vasocon®</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flonase®, Nasonex®, Rhinocort AQ®</td>
<td><strong>Nasal Antihistamine</strong>: Astelin®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal symptoms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Talk to your doctor about about which medication is best for you.