

ALLERGIC RHINITIS

Allergic rhinitis (rie-NIE-tis) is a condition commonly known as hay fever. It affects millions of people in the United States. There are two types of allergic rhinitis: *seasonal* (occurs during a season) and *perennial* (occurs year around).

SEASONAL ALLERGIC RHINITIS

Seasonal allergic rhinitis is the most common type. It usually occurs in the spring, summer, and fall when the child is around mold, grass, trees, and weeds. The child's symptoms usually improve when the weather turns cold, or after the first frost.

PERENNIAL ALLERGIC RHINITIS

Perennial allergic rhinitis occurs all during the year. Often the child's symptoms are caused by breathing things found indoors, such as dust, feathers, mold, or animal dander.

SIGNS OF ALLERGIC RHINITIS

If your child has allergic rhinitis, you will notice some or all of these symptoms:

- Itchy, runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Frequent sneezing
- Mouth-breathing or snoring
- Headaches
- Nosebleeds
- Some loss of smell
- Red, puffy, itchy eye
- Ears "popping"
- Coughing spells (especially at night) caused by large amounts of drainage from the nose
- Frequent ear infections
- Dark circles under the eyes (allergic "shiners")



TREATMENT

Your child's doctor may prescribe medicines which may include an antihistamine, decongestant, and a nose spray (Picture 2). It is very important that your child takes this medicine exactly as ordered.

TESTING FOR ALLERGIC RHINITIS

If your child's symptoms do not improve, his doctor may order tests to see if he is allergic to certain things.

WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

Call the doctor if:

- Your child's symptoms do not improve or if they become worse, even when he is taking the medicine regularly.
- The medicine makes your child very drowsy (sleepy) or more active than usual.
- Your child develops a fever or headache.
- If the nose drainage is more frequent, thick, or becomes yellow or greenish in color. (This could mean a sinus infection.)

If you have any questions, please call the Children's Hospital Allergy Clinic at (614) 722-5500 or



Picture 2 If your child's doctor prescribes nose spray, he should use it as directed.