

Watery eyes, itchiness, runny nose. Sound familiar? If it does, you might have allergies.

An allergic reaction is when your immune system has a bad response to something. It normally protects your body from getting sick because of things like bacteria and viruses. It also helps protect you against allergens, the things that set off an allergic reaction.

When it doesn't do that job, it's like having a really sensitive alarm system – it alerts your body to things that really shouldn't cause a reaction.

WHAT CAUSES ALLERGIES?

A lot of people have allergies. Your genes and the environment can play a role in that. If both of your parents have allergies, you'll probably have allergies. But, you may not be allergic to the same things or have the same reactions.

Common allergy triggers are:

- Pollen
- Mold
- Pet dander
- Dust
- Medicines
- Insect bites

SIGNS

Here are some common signs of allergies:

- Breathing problems/wheezing
- Burning, itchy, red or swollen eyes
- Coughing
- Headache
- Hives/skin rash
- Itchy nose, mouth, throat or skin
- Runny nose

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you think you have an allergy, tell your doctor. There are different ways to test if you have an allergy, such as:

- Skin test
- Blood test or complete blood count
- Use or elimination tests: avoiding certain things to see if you get better or worse

The best way to reduce your symptoms is to try to avoid the things that cause your allergies. Sometimes, that's not so easy to do. It might be easy to stay away from certain foods or medicines. But if your allergy trigger comes from the air around you, it can be hard to avoid.

Allergies can't be cured, but there are ways to treat and relieve your symptoms. Treatment will depend on the kind of allergy you have and how bad it is.

Tips to allergy-proof your environment:

- Keep windows closed and use air conditioning if you're allergic to pollen.
- Keep the temperature in your home at 70°. And keep the humidity under 50% to prevent mold from growing.
- Wash your sheets, pillowcases and blankets at least once a week in hot water.
- Don't let anyone smoke in your home. Avoid cigarette smoke when you go out.

WHO IS RX OUTREACH?

Rx Outreach is a non-profit organization that provides affordable medications to people in need. Through the Rx Outreach Program, low-income, uninsured patients have access to over 650 prescription medication strengths through our mail order pharmacy. Rx Outreach serves individuals and families whose income is 300% or less of the federal poverty level. Each year we serve over 80,000 people across all fifty states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

ALLERGY/ASTHMA MEDICATIONS AVAILABLE ON THE RX OUTREACH PROGRAM

- Fluticasone (Flonase®)
- Hydroxyzine Pamoate (Vistaril®)
- Montelukast Sodium (Singulair®)
- Prednisone
- ProAir® HFA
- Theophylline ER