



Allergy Symptoms and Medications

Definition and Symptoms

Allergies (aka allergic rhinitis) are an allergic reaction in the nose caused by something in the air such as grasses, weeds, tree pollen, animals, pollution, smoke, etc.

Symptoms

- Nose: Clear runny nose, sneezing, sniffing, and nose itching (occurs in 100% of patients), with occasional cough.
- Eyes: Itchy, red, and watery eyes (Occurs in 70% of patients)
- Sinuses and Ears: May have feeling of fullness or congestion
- Throat: May feel scratchy or “tickly” at times. Voice may be hoarse.
- Skin: may be itchy at times

How to tell allergies from a cold (virus)

- Allergy symptoms happen during pollen season and occur around the same time year after year.
- A typical cold virus lasts 1-3 weeks, but allergies can last much longer, 6-8 weeks or more.
- Both can have a runny nose and watery eyes. Allergies often cause itchy eyes and nose, not typical with a cold.
- If there are symptoms of fever or sore throat, this is likely due to a cold virus. Allergies do not cause fever.

Management of symptoms

Seasonal allergies typically do not occur until children are 2 years or older. If you suspect your child may have seasonal allergies, there is no harm in trying an over the counter antihistamine like Zyrtec (dose listed below), and if the medication is helpful, likely your child is suffering from allergies (of course, he/she could have a cold as well, and symptoms from a cold will not be helped by antihistamines).

To determine what your child may be allergic to, it's helpful to look at the local pollen count on days your child is experiencing symptoms. There are helpful phone apps and websites to easily determine this such as:

[KXAN allergy forecast](#)



[Web MD allergy App](#)



[Pollen.com](#)



When allergy symptoms are milder, they can often be controlled with over the counter antihistamines as needed. However, when symptoms are more persistent, it is helpful to take antihistamines daily until the allergy count lowers (often 4 weeks or more). Additionally, for more persistent or severe symptoms, it's helpful to add daily nasal steroid medication (starting before the particular allergy usually occurs and through that allergen's entire pollen season). If eye allergies are also problematic, there are over the counter eye allergy medications that can be helpful too. (See medication dosages on next page)

Additionally, it's important to reduce pollen exposure in the following ways:

- Use a couple drops of saline nose drops or spray (available over the counter) in each nostril after coming inside. Then blow the nose and repeat as often as needed (Saline nose drops can also be made at home by mixing 1/2 teaspoon table salt into 1 cup of bottled or boiled water).
- Shower off when coming inside and wash all clothes worn outside.
- Keep windows in car and home closed and stay inside on windy days when the pollen count is high.

Call our office If...

- Symptoms are not better in 2-3 days after starting allergy medicine
- You think your child needs to be seen or your child becomes worse



Over the Counter Allergy Medications

Long acting oral antihistamines

Name	Strengths	Dose	Notes
Allegra (fexofenadine)	ODT: 30 mg Liquid: 30 mg/5 mL 12 hour tabs: 60 mg 24 hour tabs: 180 mg	6-23 months: 15 mg morning and night (2.5 mL liquid morning and night) 2-11 years: 30 mg morning and night (5 mL liquid or 1 of 30 mg ODT morning and night) ≥ 12 yrs: 60 mg morning & night or 180 mg/day (60 mg tab morning and night or 180 mg tab once/day)	Nonsedating Do not give with fruit juice (can decrease amt. absorbed)
Claritin (loratidine)	Chew Tab: 5 mg Liquid: 1 mg/mL Swallow: 10 mg	2-5 years: 5mg/day (1 of 5 mg chew tab or 5 mL liquid) 6 and older: 10 mg/day (2 of 5 mg chew tabs, 10 mL liquid, or 1 of 10 mg tabs)	Nonsedating
Zyrtec (cetirizine)	Dissolve Tab: 10 mg Liquid: 1 mg/mL Swallow: 10 mg	6-12 months: 2.5 mg/day (2.5 mL liquid) 12 months- 5 years: 2.5 to 5mg/day (2.5-5mL liquid) 6 and older: 5 to 10 mg/day (5-10 mL liquid or 1 of 10 mg dissolve tab or swallow tab)	Can be sedating (10% of population). Best of the 3 for skin itching

Short acting oral antihistamines

Name	Strengths	Dose (can be given every 6-8 hours)	
Benadryl (diphenhydramine)	Liquid: 12.5 mg/5mL Children's chewable: 12.5 mg Adult tablet: 25 mg	17-21 lbs: 3.75 mL 22-32 lbs: 5 mL or 1 chewable 33-42 lbs: 7.5 mL or 1.5 chewable 43-53 lbs: 10 mL or 2 chewable	54-64 lbs: 12.5 mL or 2.5 chewable 65-75 lbs: 15 mL or 3 chewable 76-86 lbs: 17.5 mL or 3.5 chewable >86 lbs: 20 mL or 4 chewable

Though Benadryl typically causes sleepiness, it can have the opposite effect in some children. For this reason, avoid trying Benadryl for the first time before bed. Also, you can try starting with ½ of the recommended dose above.

Nasal Sprays

Name	Dose	Notes
Nasal steroids		
Flonase (fluticasone)	2-11 years: 1 spray in each nostril daily	When 2 sprays are indicated, limit to 2 weeks duration and then reassess. Should use lowest effective dose once symptoms are controlled.
Sensimist 50mcg/spray	12 and older: 1-2 sprays in each nostril daily (start 2 sprays in each nostril daily x 1 week)	
Nasacort (triamcinolone) 55mcg/spray	2-5 years: 1 spray in each nostril daily 6-11 years: 1-2 sprays in each nostril daily (start with 1 spray) 12 and older: 1-2 sprays in each nostril daily (start with 2 sprays)	For predictable allergy exposures, start meds 2 days before and end 4 days after end of exposure Administration: Head in normal position or with chin slightly tucked. Direct spray away from nasal septum (center of nose), and towards the outside corner of the eye. After spraying, sniff gently to pull into the higher parts of the nose. Spit out any medicine that drains into the throat.
Rhinocort (budesonide) 32mcg/spray	6-11 years: 1-2 sprays in each nostril daily (start with 1 spray) 12 and older: 1-2 sprays in each nostril daily (start with 2 sprays)	
Non-steroid nose sprays		
NasalCrom (cromolyn sodium)	2 years and older: 1 spray in each nostril 3-4 times/day	Helpful for brief exposures (minutes to hours). For prolonged exposures, start 4-7 days in advance. Can try before nasal steroids.
Antihistamine eye drops		
Ketotifen (Zaditor or Alaway)	3 years and older: 1 drop in each eye every 12 hours.	