

Allergies

Allergies are among the most common chronic conditions worldwide. Symptoms of allergies range from making you miserable to putting you at risk for life-threatening reactions. An allergic reaction begins in the immune system. Our immune system protects us from invading organisms that can cause illness. If you have an allergy, your immune system mistakes an otherwise harmless substance as an invader. This substance is called an allergen. The immune system overreacts to the allergen by producing Immunoglobulin E (IgE) antibodies. These antibodies travel to cells that release histamine and other chemicals, causing an allergic reaction.

An allergic reaction typically triggers symptoms in the nose, lungs, throat, sinuses, ears, lining of the stomach or on the skin. For some people, allergies can also trigger symptoms of asthma. In the most serious cases, a life-threatening reaction called anaphylaxis (an-a-fi-LAK-sis) can occur.



A number of different allergens are responsible for allergic reactions. **The most common include:**

Pollen, Dust, Food, Insect stings, Animal dander, Mold, Medications, Latex.

Food Allergies - your immune system overreacts to a particular protein found in that food. Many food allergies are diagnosed in young children, though allergies may also appear in older children and adults. There's no cure for food allergies; however, many children outgrow food allergies. Allergic reactions usually occur within a few minutes of eating the trigger food, though reactions can sometimes appear a few hours later. If you believe you or your child may have a

food allergy, consult an allergist or immunologist who can order tests to determine whether it's a food allergy, food intolerance, or something else. Some symptoms of intolerance and allergies are similar, but the differences between the two conditions are important. If you have a food intolerance, eating the food can leave you feeling miserable. With a true food allergy, your body's reaction to the food could be life-threatening. The main symptoms include hives, "throat closing," and difficulty breathing.

Eight foods responsible for *most* allergic reactions:

- Cow's milk • Eggs • Fish • Peanuts • Shellfish • Soy • Tree nuts • Wheat

Symptoms: • Stuffy or itchy nose, sneezing, or itchy, teary eyes • Vomiting, stomach cramps, or diarrhea • Hives or red, itchy skin • Swelling.

Source: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. <http://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/allergies.aspx>

School Allergy Forms

[Allergy Anaphylaxis Health Care Plan](#) - Print this form and take to physician to complete if your student needs allergy medication in school.

[Special Dietary Needs Process Explanation and Definitions](#) - If your student dietary allergies or intolerances, please read this letter and have your health care provider complete the required District Form included.