

## Allergic Rhinitis

Allergic rhinitis – commonly known as hay fever – is a group of symptoms affecting the nose. But don't be misled by the name – you don't have to be exposed to hay to have symptoms. And hay fever doesn't cause a fever.

Allergic rhinitis develops when the body's immune system becomes sensitized and overreacts to something in the environment that typically causes no problems in most people.

Allergic rhinitis is commonly known as hay fever. But you don't have to be exposed to hay to have symptoms. And contrary to what the name suggests, you don't have to have a fever to have hay fever.

Allergic rhinitis takes two different forms:

- **Seasonal:** Symptoms of seasonal allergic rhinitis can occur in spring, summer and early fall. They are usually caused by allergic sensitivity to airborne mold spores or to pollens from grass, trees and weeds.
- **Perennial:** People with perennial allergic rhinitis experience symptoms year-round. It is generally caused by dust mites, pet hair or dander, cockroaches or mold. Underlying or hidden food allergies rarely cause perennial nasal symptoms.

Some people may experience both types of rhinitis, with perennial symptoms getting worse during specific pollen seasons. There are also nonallergic causes for rhinitis including irritants such as cigarette or other smoke, perfumes, cleaning products and other strong odors. It's time to take control of your allergic rhinitis and start enjoying life again.

Hay Fever Management and Treatment:

Avoid triggers by making changes to your home and to your behavior.

- Keep windows closed during high pollen periods; use air conditioning in your home and car.
- Wear glasses or sunglasses when outdoors to keep pollen out of your eyes.
- Use "mite-proof" bedding covers to limit exposure to dust mites and a dehumidifier to control mold. (If you smell mildew, you likely have mold).
- Wash your hands after petting any animal and have a nonallergic person help with pet grooming, preferably in a well-ventilated area or outside.