



**LEARN ABOUT
ANOTHER WAY TO
TREAT YOUR ALLERGIES**

STALLERGENES  GREER

WHAT ARE ALLERGIES?

It's probably not something you think about, but every time you open your mouth or inhale, tiny particles from the environment that are floating in the air can get into your nose and lungs. The immune system reacts to bad particles to protect the body against things that are harmful, such as bacteria and viruses that can lead to colds. But for some people, their bodies also react to harmless particle allergens they think are threats and attack them, causing the symptoms of allergies.

This is called an allergic reaction and causes allergy symptoms such as a stuffy or runny nose (rhinitis), sneezing, and itchy, watery eyes. These symptoms can be caused by outdoor or indoor allergens.

If you or a family member suffer from allergy symptoms like sneezing and itchy eyes, you're not alone. As many as 30% of Canadians are affected by allergies. Allergies can affect you or your family in many ways that may keep you from being able to do the things you enjoy.

FOR MANY PEOPLE WITH ALLERGIES, EVEN THE MOST BEAUTIFUL DAY CAN BE A MISERABLE ONE



Sneezing
through
picnics



Rubbing itchy,
watery eyes
at the game



Hiking with
a runny nose



ALLERGENS MAY INCLUDE:

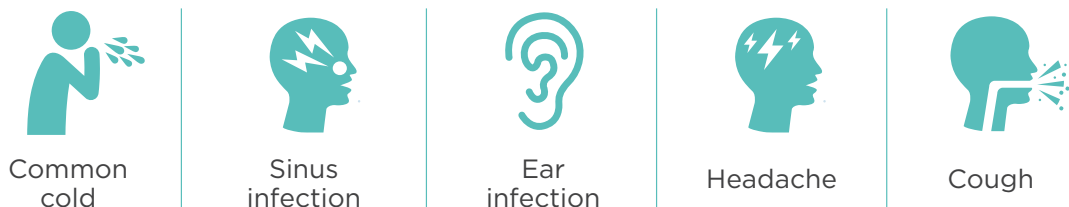


HOW CAN ALLERGIES AFFECT YOU OR A FAMILY MEMBER?

As people with allergies know, symptoms can make it hard to carry on with daily activities. For example, symptoms caused by allergies to pollen, known as hay fever, can range from mild to miserable.

Sometimes people don't realize their symptoms are caused by allergic reactions to allergens. For example, people may not realize a mild allergy is causing them to sneeze or have a runny nose when there's a lot of pollen in the air or a pet is nearby.

More severe allergy symptoms may be confused for illnesses, such as



People with allergies may not be aware of how much allergy symptoms are affecting their lives. Many people have to avoid doing certain activities, going places, or having pets. Others may miss school or work or have trouble paying attention. And in the most severe cases, allergies may even be life-threatening.

HOW ARE ALLERGIES DIAGNOSED?

3 KEY STEPS IN THE PROCESS OF ALLERGY DIAGNOSIS



1. patient's
medical
history



2. a physical
examination



3. allergy
testing

If you or a family member schedule a doctor's appointment to discuss allergy symptoms, or you bring it up during a routine office visit, the doctor will have many questions about your or your family member's health and allergy symptoms.

For example, the doctor may ask:



- What are the symptoms?
- How long have you been experiencing symptoms?
- What time of year do symptoms occur?
- What seems to cause symptoms?

A physical exam will follow. If the diagnosis is allergic rhinitis, the doctor may perform a skin or blood test. This will help him or her find what may be causing the allergies.

It's important to work closely with your doctor to treat allergy symptoms. Together, you can create a treatment plan that will be best for you or your family member. If you're visiting a primary care doctor, he or she may refer you to a specialist.

**IT'S IMPORTANT TO
WORK CLOSELY WITH
YOUR DOCTOR TO TREAT
ALLERGY SYMPTOMS.**

THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO TREAT YOUR ALLERGIES



COMPLETE ALLERGEN AVOIDANCE

It's advised that you try to avoid the allergens that triggers your allergic reaction, but that's not always possible.



MEDICATIONS THAT TREAT SYMPTOMS

These medications can offer you effective, though temporary, allergy symptom relief. Some examples include antihistamines, decongestants, nasal steroid sprays, cromolyn sodium (anti-inflammatory medicine), eye drops, and other medicines your doctor may recommend.

Some of these medicines are available without prescriptions, while others require them



ALLERGY IMMUNOTHERAPY (AIT)

It's thought that AIT works with your body's natural defenses. However, the exact way it works isn't known.

AIT is another option. It's recommended for people who can't avoid allergens, or for people who aren't satisfied with the current medicines used to treat their allergy symptoms.



WHAT IS ALLERGY IMMUNOTHERAPY (AIT)?

The basic approach to controlling allergies sounds easy—just avoid the allergens that cause your allergic symptoms. However, avoiding these things isn't always possible.

This is when AIT can help by working with the body's natural defense system. AIT slowly trains the immune system to be less sensitive to allergens, so it doesn't respond too strongly to them. This is done by introducing tiny amounts of the allergen to the body over time, slowly getting the immune system used to it.

Then, when the body is exposed to the allergen during normal day-to-day activity, the immune system doesn't try to attack it. This can mean you or your family member may have fewer allergy symptoms.

AIT HAS BEEN USED FOR OVER 100 YEARS.

In 1911, two scientists, recognizing that pollen was the cause of hay fever, thought they could help reduce or eliminate symptoms by injecting hay fever patients with the pollen to which they were allergic.

THEIR EXPERIMENT WORKED.



**IF YOU THINK YOU MAY HAVE ALLERGIES AND WANT TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT ALLERGY TREATMENT OPTIONS, ASK YOUR DOCTOR.**

FORMS OF AIT

There are two common types of AIT: allergy shots or sublingual (under the tongue) tablets.



SUBLINGUAL AIT TABLETS

Small doses of a specific allergen are given as a tablet under the tongue



ALLERGY SHOTS

Injections of allergens are given in increasing doses over time

IS AIT RIGHT FOR ME?

Keep in mind that AIT may not be right for everyone. AIT can cause increased allergy symptoms, such as sneezing, nasal congestion, and hives. The administration of AIT has been associated with severe, life-threatening systemic reactions, including anaphylaxis and death.

Serious reactions may also include:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| —trouble breathing | —dizziness or fainting | —vomiting |
| —throat tightness or swelling | —rapid or weak heartbeat | —diarrhea |
| —trouble swallowing or speaking | —severe stomach cramps or pain | —severe flushing or itching of the skin. |

These symptoms require immediate medical attention. If you have asthma, it should be well-controlled before AIT since you may be more likely to have serious side effects. If AIT is right for you or your family member, you and your doctor will design a treatment plan together.

THE AIT CONVERSATION

It's important to work with your doctor to:



Find out if you or a family member has an allergy



Identify what's causing it, and



Develop a treatment plan

Don't hesitate to ask about treatment options. Here are sample questions that can help you or your family member get the most out of talking to a doctor:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| • What are my treatment options? | • What are my AIT options? |
| • How effective are these options? | • How is AIT started? |
| • Is AIT the right approach? | • How much of a commitment is AIT? |
| • What are the risks and benefits associated with AIT? | |

LEARN ABOUT ANOTHER WAY TO TREAT YOUR ALLERGIES

Look inside to learn about:

- Different kinds of allergies and their causes
- How allergies are diagnosed
- Allergy treatments, including allergy immunotherapy (AIT)
- How AIT may help your allergy symptoms
- Talking to your doctor about allergies and treatment options



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