

What is allergic rhinitis?

Allergic Rhinitis (AR), also known as hay fever, is a common problem. It can affect your nose and sinuses. AR is usually caused by pollen, dust, pets, or mold. For some people, these will cause a runny nose and cold-like symptoms. This is because your body is sensitive to these substances. Allergic rhinitis can be seasonal, or it can last all year round.



WHAT DOES ALLERGIC RHINITIS FEEL LIKE?



You may feel:

- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Itchy nose
- Red, itchy, watery eyes
- Sneezing
- Cough
- Postnasal drip
- Fatigue
- Headache

ENVIRONMENT

The best way to avoid allergies is to avoid the things you are allergic to:

- Stay indoors and keep windows closed when pollen counts are high
- Use air conditioners instead of fans drawing air from outside
- Use a HEPA air filter to clean the air in your home
- Replace your pillowcase and beddings with hypoallergenic covers
- Use wood or tile flooring instead of carpet

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE (TCM)

TCM can include acupuncture, herbals, massage, and dietary therapy. For allergies, some people find improvements with herbal remedies and acupuncture. Acupuncture involves using thin needles in certain parts of the body to restore the flow of the body's energy. Acupressure is a similar technique to acupuncture, but involves pressing on the points instead of puncturing the skin with needles.



NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS AND HERBAL MEDICINES

The following natural treatments might help with your congestion. If you take medications or have other medical problems, talk to your health professional about trying these treatments.

- Butterbur
- Quercetin
- Stinging nettles

NASAL IRRIGATION

Nasal saline sprays and neti pots can both help with AR symptoms. Both use salt water (saline) to rinse out the nose and sinuses. To use a neti pot, fill the pot with saline solution first. Do not use tap water for this. Use distilled or filtered water instead. Then, lean your head sideways over the sink. Gently pour the salt water in the higher nostril. Then turn your head the other way and repeat. Be sure to breathe through your mouth during this process.



NUTRITION

Some people can reduce their symptoms by trying an elimination diet to see if certain foods are making their symptoms worse. Dairy and gluten-containing foods can sometimes worsen symptoms of AR.

Sources for more information:

- Mayo Clinic
- University of Maryland Complementary and Alternative Medicine Guide
- National Center for Integrative and Complementary Health

For more information, scan the QR code below, or visit nciph.org/allergic_rhinitis



