

Natural Help 4...

Allergies



What are Allergies?

Allergies are described as **abnormal responses within the body to things or substances that are typically harmless**. However, this incorrect response causes the immune system to react to the substance (known as allergens) as if it was harmful. The symptoms of allergies can make you feel miserable and rotten! It is a good idea for any allergy sufferer to get to know which allergens you are allergic to so that you can control the symptoms.

Allergies are extremely common and **affect more than 20 percent of adults and children** in the United States. According to the Allergy Report from the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, allergies are the sixth leading cause of chronic illness. It usually develops during childhood or early adulthood. Most allergies are inherited and people are more likely to have a tendency to be allergic if there is a family history of allergies or asthma.

Sometimes, people with allergies may experience a **severe reaction known as anaphylaxis**. The signs of anaphylaxis may start with severe itching of the eyes or face and develop into more serious symptoms such as swelling of the lips, tongue and throat, abdominal pain, cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, hives, and angiodema (hives in the throat). This type of reaction usually occurs within minutes after been exposed to the triggering allergen (such as a peanut). It is a rare, life-threatening emergency and medical attention is required immediately.

The most common allergens

Airborne particles: Airborne particles are the most common allergens, often also referred to as environmental allergens. These allergens include pollen from grass or trees, dust mites that live in house dust, mold spores found in damp areas, and animal dander from the skin and saliva of pets. Symptoms include sneezing, runny nose, wheezing and coughing, congestion, and itchy watery eyes.

Foods: Certain foods such as milk, eggs, wheat, soy, peanuts, tree nuts and seafood are some of the most common food allergies. Allergic reactions to these types of foods occur within minutes of eating and symptoms can be severe. Symptoms include wheezing, coughing, hives, runny nose, vomiting, diarrhea, and swelling in the area around the mouth.

Insect bites or stings: The venom in insect bites or stings causes allergic reactions in people which result in pain, swelling, and redness around the affected area. Symptoms also include difficulty breathing, swelling of the face, throat, or mouth, wheezing or difficulty swallowing, hives that appear as a red, itchy rash that spreads to areas, restlessness and anxiety ; rapid pulse; and dizziness or a

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sharp drop in blood pressure. These types of [allergies](#) are very severe and may cause an anaphylactic reaction in some people.

Chemicals: Certain chemicals such as household cleaners, laundry detergents, cosmetics, pesticides, or dyes can also cause allergic reactions in some people. Common symptoms include skin rash hives, eye tearing and irritation, wheezing, and itching of the skin.

Medicines: The most common medicines that can cause allergic reactions are antibiotics. Other medications such as over-the-counter medications can also cause allergic reactions.

Diagnosing Allergies

The diagnosis of an allergy is based on your symptoms, medical history and a physical examination. Certain tests such as **blood tests, skin tests or patch tests** are performed to check for signs of an allergy.

Symptoms and signs

The most common symptoms and signs associated with [allergies](#) include:

- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Congestion
- Wheezing
- Watery, tearing eyes
- Itchy eyes, ears, lips, throat and palate
- Sinus pain
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Hives
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Increase in secretions

What Causes Allergies?

[Allergies](#) occur when a person's **immune system mistakenly attacks the allergen as an invader** and produces immunoglobulin E (IgE) antibodies to combat these substances. These antibodies then cause certain cells in the body to release chemicals such as histamine into the bloodstream.

These chemicals affect your eyes, nose, throat, lungs, skin or gastrointestinal tract and produces allergy **symptoms such as sneezing, itchy eyes and a runny nose**. Every time that you are exposed to that same allergen, an allergic reaction will be triggered.

Help for Allergies

For the [treatment of allergies](#) to be effective, the individual has to be **aware of the allergen or substance that is causing the allergy**. There are various



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

medications such as topical and oral antihistamines, corticosteroids, nasal congestants and mastocyte stabilizers that help reduce the [symptoms of allergies](#).

People who experience severe allergy attacks often require a quick shot of epinephrine, a type of medication used to counteract an anaphylactic reaction. When these medications fail to achieve the desired results, **immunotherapy or allergy desensitization** may be used.

Natural Remedies

Certain herbal and homeopathic remedies have been found to be beneficial in the treatment and [prevention of allergies](#). These remedies are not only much safer to use than the traditional antihistamine drugs but also gentler for the body. Herbs such as *Urtica urens* and *Plantago lanceolata* (also known as plantain) contain **effective anti-inflammatory and astringent properties** and have a long history of treating inflammation, [allergies](#) and respiratory complaints.

Quercetin is a highly effective herb that contains antioxidants and helps to boost the immune system and improve circulation while *Euphrasia officinalis* (Eyebright) maintains eye health and good vision. In addition, homeopathic ingredients such as *Allium cepa* and *Ars. Iod* helps to **control allergy symptoms such as sneezing, wheezing chest**, inflammation in the eyes and irritability.

Tips to cope with allergies

There are several ways to help you cope and [deal with allergies](#), and these include:

- Avoid foods that trigger allergy symptoms and learn how to read food labels
- Keep your house free of dust and pet dander by vacuuming and dusting regularly with a damp cloth
- Avoid with areas with a high count of pollen such as gardens, grass, parks or fields
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet to boost your immune system
- Keep pets out of the house, especially from the bedroom and living room areas
- Monitor the weather, especially on those days when the pollen count is high
- Close windows when pollen season is at its peak
- Wash clothing and hair regularly because pollen can cling to it
- Use fragrance-free cosmetic and beauty products
- Choose hardwood or tiled floors instead of carpets and rugs – carpets and rugs tend to collect more dust
- Use protective covers for mattresses and pillows to shield against dust mites
- Wear close-fitting sunglasses to prevent pollen from blowing into your eyes
- Keep your home well-humidified
- Stop smoking and do not allow others to smoke in your home or presence

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed

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according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic



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medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called 'standardized' extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While 'standardized' extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

Related Natural Remedies:

AllergiClear: Stay allergy-free using natural immune system support

AllergiClear is a 100% natural remedy developed by experts in the field of natural health and especially formulated to **support a healthy immune system as well as respiratory and skin health.**

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