

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Allergies

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General Allergy Patient Information

Allergies are very common conditions that can have a severe impact on daily life. Allergies result from an abnormal immune system response to substances that usually do not cause a reaction in most people. These substances are called **allergens**. In some cases, an allergic reaction can be life threatening.

There are many types of allergens, or allergy triggers, and many types of allergic reactions. Allergies often are related to other medical conditions, such as asthma and eczema (dermatitis). Allergy symptoms may be similar to those caused by another condition, such as a cold or a stomach virus. For example, an allergic reaction to an allergen in the air (e.g., pollen, dust, mold) can cause nasal congestion, sore throat, and cough; and a food allergy can cause abdominal pain, cramping, diarrhea, and nausea.

Here are some important questions to ask your doctor about your allergies. The answers to these questions can help you to better manage your condition. **Print this page**, check off the questions you would like answered, and give it to your doctor, physician's assistant (PA), nurse, or other member of your allergy care team.

Questions to Ask about Your Allergies

- How severe are my allergies? Are my allergies life-threatening?
 - What complications may I experience as a result of an allergic reaction?
 - What allergens do you suspect are responsible for causing my allergies? How can I avoid these allergy triggers?
 - Are my allergies hereditary or related to my environment? Are they seasonal or year round, or associated with another condition, such as asthma or eczema?
 - Do my allergies require medical treatment? Do they increase my risk for developing other medical problems?
 - Might my child outgrow his or her allergies?
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Questions to Ask about Allergy Tests

- Will allergy tests (e.g., skin tests, patch tests, blood tests) be used to diagnose my allergies?
- Do you recommend "use and elimination" allergy testing?
- Will a pulmonary function test be performed to help diagnose my condition?
- Will my allergy tests be conducted by a board-certified allergist/immunologist (allergy specialist)?

