Your healthcare provider may perform an allergy test if you have allergy symptoms that bother you. Providers also perform allergy tests on people who have [asthma](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/6424-asthma). The test can identify allergy triggers that can worsen asthma symptoms or bring on an asthma attack.

You may also need a test if you’ve had a severe allergic reaction called [anaphylaxis](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/8619-anaphylaxis). This potentially life-threatening problem can cause hives or swelling, breathing difficulty and/or a sharp drop in [blood pressure](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17649-blood-pressure) that brings on anaphylactic shock. Your health history along with allergy testing is used to determine the cause of severe reaction. If you have had an anaphylactic reaction or may be at risk for one, then you may need to carry an [epinephrine (adrenaline) auto-injector](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/drugs/20260-epinephrine-injection-auto-injector) (EpiPen®) to treat the symptoms.

**How do I know if I need an allergy test?**

If you’re allergic to allergens in the air like dust, pollen or pet dander, you may develop [allergic rhinitis](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/8622-allergic-rhinitis-hay-fever). Also known as hay fever, this allergic reaction causes:

* [Headaches](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9639-headaches).
* Itchy, watery eyes.
* [Nasal congestion](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/symptoms/17980-nasal-congestion), sneezing or [runny nose](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/symptoms/17660-runny-nose).
* [Shortness of breath](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/symptoms/16942-shortness-of-breath-dyspnea), [wheezing](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/symptoms/15203-wheezing) or [chronic cough](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/15048-chronic-cough-overview).
* [Sore throat](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/symptoms/8274-sore-throat-pharyngitis).

Food allergy symptoms typically occur within 30 minutes of food ingestion but may occur up to two hours after ingestion. People with food allergies may experience:

* Skin symptoms such as hives, swelling of the face, lips or tongue, generalized itching.
* Respiratory symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest or throat tightness.
* GI symptoms such as nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain and cramps, vomiting and diarrhea.
* Cardiovascular symptoms such as pale skin, weak pulse, dizziness or lightheadedness.