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URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/allergy.html>

## Allergy

**Also called: Hypersensitivity**

An allergy is a reaction by your immune system to something that does not bother most other people. People who have allergies often are sensitive to more than one thing. Substances that often cause reactions are:

- Pollen [<https://medlineplus.gov/hayfever.html>]
- Dust mites
- Mold spores
- Pet dander
- Food [<https://medlineplus.gov/foodallergy.html>]
- Insect stings
- Medicines [<https://medlineplus.gov/drugreactions.html>]

Normally, your immune system fights germs. It is your body's defense system. In most allergic reactions, however, it is responding to a false alarm. Genes and the environment probably both play a role.

Allergies can cause a variety of symptoms such as a runny nose, sneezing, itching, rashes [<https://medlineplus.gov/rashes.html>] , swelling, or asthma [<https://medlineplus.gov/asthma.html>] . Allergies can range from minor to severe. Anaphylaxis [<https://medlineplus.gov/anaphylaxis.html>] is a severe reaction that can be life-threatening. Doctors use skin and blood tests to diagnose allergies. Treatments include medicines, allergy shots, and avoiding the substances that cause the reactions.

## Start Here



- Allergic Reactions [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/conditions-library/allergies/allergic-reactions>]  
(American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/biblioteca-de-condiciones/biblioteca-de-alergia/reacciones-alergicas-consejos-para-tener-en-cuenta>]

## Symptoms


- Red Meat Allergy [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/red-meat-allergy.html>]  
(Nemours Foundation) - **In English and Spanish**

Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/red-meat-allergy.html>]

## Diagnosis and Tests

- All About Allergy Testing [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/conditions-library/allergies/all-about-allergy-testing>] (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/biblioteca-de-condiciones/biblioteca-de-alergia/evaluacion-de-las-alergias-consejos-para-tener-en>]
- Allergy Blood Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/allergy-blood-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-alergias/>]
- Allergy Skin Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/allergy-skin-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-alergias-en-la-piel/>]

## Prevention and Risk Factors

- Allergens and Irritants [<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/allergens>]  (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences)
- Allergy-Proof Your House [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/allergies/in-depth/allergy/art-20049365?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/allergies/in-depth/allergy/art-20049365?p=1>]

## Treatments and Therapies


- 6 Things To Know About Complementary Health Approaches for Seasonal Allergy Relief [<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/tips/things-to-know-about-complementary-health-approaches-for-seasonal-allergy-relief>]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)
- Allergy Medications: Know Your Options [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/allergies/in-depth/allergy-medications/art-20047403?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/allergies/in-depth/allergy-medications/art-20047403?p=1>]
- Allergy Shots: Could They Help Your Allergies? [<https://familydoctor.org/allergy-shots-could-they-help-your-allergies/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)  
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/inyecciones-antialergicas-pueden-ayudarlo-con-sus-alergias/?adfree=true>]
- Butterbur [<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/butterbur>]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)
- Decongestants: OTC Relief for Congestion [<https://familydoctor.org/decongestants-otc-relief-for-congestion/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)  
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/descongestionantes-alivio-para-la-congestion-de-venta-libre/?adfree=true>]
- Nasal Wash Treatment [<https://www.nationaljewish.org/conditions/medications/asthma-medications/alternative/nasal-wash-treatment?modal=1>] (National Jewish Health)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nationaljewish.org/education/health-information/espanol/tratamiento-de-lavados-nasales>]
- **New!** Suicide Warnings on Medications [[https://aapp.org/\\_q/patient/suicide-warnings/suicide-warnings.pdf](https://aapp.org/_q/patient/suicide-warnings/suicide-warnings.pdf)] (American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists) - PDF

## Related Issues



- Allergic Bronchopulmonary Aspergillosis (ABPA) [<https://www.aaaai.org/conditions-treatments/related-conditions/allergic-bronchopulmonary-aspergillosis>] (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)  
Also in Spanish [[https://www.aaaai.org/conditions-treatments/afecciones-y-tratamientos/afecciones-relacionadas/aspergilosis-broncopulmonar-alergica-\(abpa\)](https://www.aaaai.org/conditions-treatments/afecciones-y-tratamientos/afecciones-relacionadas/aspergilosis-broncopulmonar-alergica-(abpa))]
- Allergies and Asthma: They Often Occur Together [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/asthma/in-depth/allergies-and-asthma/art-20047458?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

- Colds, Allergies and Sinusitis - How to Tell the Difference [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/conditions-library/allergies/colds-allergies-sinusitis>] (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.aaaai.org/Aaaaai/media/MediaLibrary/PDF%20Documents/Spanish/EL-allergies-colds-allergies-sinusitis-patient-spanish.pdf>]
- Eosinophilic Esophagitis: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/eosinophilicesophagitis.html>]  
 (National Library of Medicine)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/eosinophilicesophagitis.html>]
- Feel Better. Live Better. See an Allergist / Immunologist [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/conditions-library/allergies/feel-better-live-better-see-an-allergist-immunolog>]  
(American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/biblioteca-de-condiciones/biblioteca-de-alergia/sentirse-mejor-vivir-mejor-consulte-a-un-alergista>]
- Is It Flu, COVID-19, Allergies, or a Cold? [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2022/01/it-flu-covid-19-allergies-or-cold>]  
 (National Institutes of Health)  
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/es-gripe-covid-19-alergias-o-un-resfriado>]
- Marvels of Mucus and Phlegm: The Slime That Keeps You Healthy [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2020/08/marvels-mucus-phlegm>]  (National Institutes of Health)  
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/las-maravillas-de-la-mucosidad-y-la-flema>]

## Specifics

- Allergic Skin Conditions [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/conditions-library/allergies/allergic-skin-conditions>]  (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)
- Cockroach Allergy [<https://aafa.org/allergies/types-of-allergies/insect-allergy/cockroach-allergy/>]  
(Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America)
- Dust Mite Allergy [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dust-mites/symptoms-causes/syc-20352173?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/dust-mites/symptoms-causes/syc-20352173?p=1>]
- Mold Allergy [<https://aafa.org/allergies/types-of-allergies/mold-allergy/>] (Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America)
- Nickel Allergy [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/nickel-allergy/symptoms-causes/syc-20351529?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/nickel-allergy/symptoms-causes/syc-20351529?p=1>]
- Oral Hypersensitivity Reactions [[https://www.aaom.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=125:oral-hypersensitivity-reactions&catid=22:patient-condition-information&Itemid=120](https://www.aaom.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=125:oral-hypersensitivity-reactions&catid=22:patient-condition-information&Itemid=120)] (American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons)
- Pet Allergy [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/pet-allergy/symptoms-causes/syc-20352192?p=1>]  
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/pet-allergy/symptoms-causes/syc-20352192?p=1>]
- Physical Allergy [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/immune-disorders/allergic-reactions-and-other-hypersensitivity-disorders/physical-allergy>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/trastornos-inmunol%C3%B3gicos/reacciones-al%C3%A9rgicas-y-otros-trastornos-de-hipersensibilidad/alergia-f%C3%ADsica>]
- Stinging Insect Allergy [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/conditions-library/allergies/stinging-insect-allergy>] (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/biblioteca-de-condiciones/biblioteca-de-alergia/picaduras-de-insectos-consejos-para-tener-en-cuent>]
- Sun Allergy [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/sun-allergy/symptoms-causes/syc-20378077?p=1>]  
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/sun-allergy/symptoms-causes/syc-20378077?p=1>]




## Genetics

- Allergic asthma: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/allergic-asthma>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Vibratory urticaria: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/vibratory-urticaria/>]  (National Library of Medicine)

## Health Check Tools

- Virtual Allergist [<https://allergist.aaaai.org/virtual-allergist/>] (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)


## Videos and Tutorials

- Allergies [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000002.htm>]  (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/anatomyvideos/000002.htm>]
- Histamine: The Stuff Allergies are Made of [<https://medlineplus.gov/medlineplus-videos/histamine-the-stuff-allergies-are-made-of/>]   (National Library of Medicine)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/videos-de-medlineplus/histamina-de-lo-que-esta-hecha-la-alergia/>]



## Test Your Knowledge

- Pet Allergy Quiz [<https://www.aaaai.org/conditions-treatments/allergies/pet-allergy/pet-allergy-quiz>] (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)
- Seasonal Allergy Quiz [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/quiz/000812\\_18.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/quiz/000812_18.htm)] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [[https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/quiz/000812\\_78.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/quiz/000812_78.htm)]

## Statistics and Research

- FastStats: Allergies and Hay Fever [<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/allergies.htm>] (National Center for Health Statistics)
- Seasonal Allergies at a Glance: What the Science Says [<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/seasonal-allergies-at-a-glance>]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)

## Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Hypersensitivity [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Hypersensitivity%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Rhinitis, Allergic, Perennial [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Rhinitis,+Allergic,+Perennial%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

## Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Alternaria Allergy and Asthma in Children. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/41011030>]
- Article: The Microecological-Immune Axis in Pediatric Allergic Diseases: Imbalance Mechanisms and Regulatory... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/41010451>]
- Article: Nutraceuticals Against Oxidative Stress in Allergic Diseases. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/41008654>]
- Allergy -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Hypersensitivity%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D>]



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## Reference Desk

- Overview of the Immune System [<https://www.niaid.nih.gov/research/immune-system-overview>]

 (National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases)

## Find an Expert

- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology [<https://www.aaaai.org/>]
- Find an Allergist/Immunologist [<https://allergist.aaaai.org/find/>]  
(American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases [<https://www.niaid.nih.gov/>] 
- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences [<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/>]   
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/scied/teachers/educacion>]

## Children

- All about Allergies (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/allergy.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
- Allergy Relief for Your Child [<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/allergy-relief-your-child>]  
(Food and Drug Administration)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/articulos-para-el-consumidor-en-espanol/alivio-para-la-alergia-de-su-hijo>]
- Do Allergies Cause Asthma? [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/allergies-asthma.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/kids/allergies-asthma.html>]
- Prevention of Allergies and Asthma in Children [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/conditions-library/allergies/prevention-of-allergies-and-asthma-in-children>]  
(American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/biblioteca-de-condiciones/biblioteca-de-alergia/prevencion-de-alergias-y-asma-en-ninos-consejos-pa>]
- What Are Allergies [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/allergies.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/kids/allergies.html>]
- What Is a Pediatric Allergist / Immunologist? [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/health-management/pediatric-specialists/Pages/What-is-a-Pediatric-Allergist-Immunologist.aspx>]  
(American Academy of Pediatrics)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/family-life/health-management/pediatric-specialists/paginas/what-is-a-pediatric-allergist-immunologist.aspx>]

## Teenagers

- Allergies [<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/allergies.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
- Do Allergies Cause Asthma? (For Teens) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/allergies-asthma.html>]  
(Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/teens/allergies-asthma.html>]

## Patient Handouts

- Allergic reactions [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000005.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000005.htm>]
- Allergic rhinitis - self-care [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000547.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000547.htm>]

- Allergies [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000812.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000812.htm>]
- Allergies, asthma, and dust [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000487.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000487.htm>]
- Allergies, asthma, and molds [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000488.htm>]  
(Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000488.htm>]
- Allergy testing - skin [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003519.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003519.htm>]
- Angioedema [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000846.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000846.htm>]
- Antihistamines for allergies [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000549.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000549.htm>]



## MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Allergic conjunctivitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001031.htm>]

Allergic reactions [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000005.htm>]

Allergic rhinitis - self-care [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000547.htm>]

Allergic rhinitis - what to ask your doctor - adult  
[<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000247.htm>]

Allergic rhinitis - what to ask your doctor - child  
[<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000248.htm>]

Allergies [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000002.htm>]

Allergies [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000812.htm>]

Allergies, asthma, and dust [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000487.htm>]

Allergies, asthma, and molds [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000488.htm>]

Allergies, asthma, and pollen [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000489.htm>]

Allergy shots [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000405.htm>]

Allergy testing - skin [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003519.htm>]

Angioedema [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000846.htm>]

Antihistamines for allergies [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000549.htm>]

Erythema multiforme [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000851.htm>]

Hypersensitivity vasculitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000874.htm>]

Nasal corticosteroid sprays [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000404.htm>]

Saline nasal washes [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000801.htm>]

Sneezing [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003060.htm>]

Stuffy or runny nose - adult [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003049.htm>]

Stuffy or runny nose - children [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003051.htm>]

## Related Health Topics

Anaphylaxis [<https://medlineplus.gov/anaphylaxis.html>]

Asthma [<https://medlineplus.gov/asthma.html>]

Drug Reactions [<https://medlineplus.gov/drugreactions.html>]

Food Allergy [<https://medlineplus.gov/foodallergy.html>]

Hay Fever [<https://medlineplus.gov/hayfever.html>]

Hives [<https://medlineplus.gov/hives.html>]

Indoor Air Pollution [<https://medlineplus.gov/indoorairpollution.html>]

Latex Allergy [<https://medlineplus.gov/latexallergy.html>]

Sinusitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/sinusitis.html>]

## National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Allergy* is the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases [<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/>]

## Other Languages

Find health information in languages other than English [<https://medlineplus.gov/languages/allergy.html>] on *Allergy*

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