

WHAT ARE ALLERGIES ?

- ⌘ An allergen, by definition, is any substance that causes an allergic reaction in a person's body (i.e., animals, housedust, dust mites, foods, molds and pollens such as ragweed, weeds, trees and grasses).
- ⌘ An allergy is the body's abnormal reaction to a substance found in the environment or diet that does not affect most other people. The patient's immune system reacts as if something that is normal in the environment is the "enemy."
- ⌘ When an allergen enters the body, the immune system reacts by producing a specific antibody. The next time the immune system recognizes the allergen it causes a series of reactions at the cellular level. This produces inflammatory chemicals, including histamine.
- ⌘ Histamine produces symptoms such as sneezing, scratchy throat, hives or shortness of breath. This is why an antihistimine may be prescribed to block the histamine reaction.
- ⌘ The tendency to develop allergies can be inherited, but can also be triggered by stress or illness that adversely affects a person's immune system.
- ⌘ The onset of allergies varies from sudden to gradual and may lead to symptoms that affect a person's quality of life.
- ⌘ Allergic reactions may include: sneezing, watery/itchy eyes, stuffy/runny nose, postnasal drip, head congestion, chronic cough, wheezing, asthma, headaches, skin rashes, dizziness, hoarse voice, fatigue and/or recurring ear/sinus infections.

It is not unusual for the effects allergies have on people to change, but the allergies themselves don't go away. Diagnosing allergies involves a history and physical exam and possible allergy testing. We specialize in diagnosing and treating ear, nose and throat allergy symptoms.