

## **Vasomotor Rhinitis**

By J. Allen Meadows, MD

### VASOMOTOR RHINITIS

Vasomotor rhinitis is an illness of unknown cause that is often confused with allergic rhinitis, a which causes similar symptoms due to allergies. Although the patient with vasomotor rhinitis has similar symptoms, they are not caused by specific allergenic triggers, although irritants often make the symptoms worse. It is also often called "sinus trouble", although the problem is one of the lining of the nose rather than the sinuses.

Patients with vasomotor rhinitis often seek help from allergists because the symptoms are similar to those of allergic disease. However, since allergies are not involved, allergy shots will not help vasomotor rhinitis. Unfortunately, because the cause of the disease is unknown, there is no cure and no definitive therapy. The disease is usually lifelong, exhibiting periods of remission and exacerbation during the years.

Although there is no cure for the illness, there are some things that we can do to alleviate the symptoms.

1. We know that changes in temperature, humidity, strong odors and fumes, exposures to draft, aerosols, tobacco smoke, perfumes, changes in body position, and emotional upset aggravates the illness. For these reasons, efforts to avoid those factors that worsen your symptoms are indicated.
2. The most effective method of controlling the symptoms of vasomotor rhinitis is saline nose washes. Nose washes remove the chemical irritants from the lining of the nose which often trigger nasal symptoms.
3. Nasal steroid sprays help many people with vasomotor rhinitis. Although they do not give immediate relief of symptoms, used over time they often are very helpful in the treatment of vasomotor rhinitis.
4. Antihistamines and decongestants will often be of some benefit. These will not offer dramatic relief but will aid in the long-term management of the illness.