

Treating your allergies: Oh, what a relief!

Are your eyes watering so much, you can't see your computer screen? Do you sneeze so often you can't carry on a conversation? Are you just plain tired of tired eyes? Sounds like it's way past time to address those allergies.

To get the most relief from your allergies, use a one-two punch. First, avoid or get rid of your triggers. Second, you may need to prevent or control symptoms, too. That's where allergy medicine and, sometimes, allergy shots come in.

Medications

Allergy symptoms happen when normally harmless things are seen as heavyweight attackers by your body. Allergy medicines work by stepping in and calling time out. They interrupt the reaction which can mean milder symptoms or none at all. But they don't work as well if they're watching the fight from your medicine cabinet. Instead, take them before your allergies start to act up or as directed by your doctor. That will put them ringside, ready to stop the fight as soon as they're needed. Otherwise, both the medicine and your body have to work harder to get your symptoms under control.

Antihistamines – can work quickly on runny, itchy noses, watery eyes, scratchy throats and all that sneezing. Some can dry out your mouth and make you feel drowsy though, so look for one of the many brands available that works best for you. Ask your doctor to help you too.

Decongestants – help knock out that stuffy nose. They're available in nasal sprays or as pills or liquids. Use these only as directed to keep symptoms from coming back, often worse than before. This type of medicine can also raise your blood pressure, make you feel nervous or cause trouble sleeping. Before taking a decongestant, clear it with your doctor.

Nasal steroid sprays – can help with sneezing, itchy, stuffy or runny nose. Because they can take up to two weeks to work, they're not a fast fix. Instead, they have to be used on a regular basis. Some can irritate your nose. As with all medicines, be sure and talk with your doctor or pharmacist about what's right for you.

Allergy Shots

If avoiding triggers and taking medicine still isn't bringing relief, talk with your doctor about seeing an allergist. An allergist will review your symptoms and may also do some tests to see what the problem is. Allergy shots may also be advised. Shots expose you to small doses of whatever allergen bothers you. The hope is that over time your body will get used to it. The dose is gradually increased until your body can go the distance – with little or no reaction. But allergy shots are not for everyone and they're not a quick fix. Your doctor can help decide if they are a good choice for you.



Sources: <http://www.webmd.com/allergies/allergy-relief-10/allergy-questions-answers?print=true>
<http://www.webmd.com/allergies/features/pretreatment?print=true>



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