

Why doesn't my body just get used to allergens?



Types of allergies

Allergies are considered a chronic condition. If you're allergic to dust, your body will always have an allergic reaction to dust. If you have seasonal allergies, you're likely to feel sick every time your body is exposed to tree or grass pollen.

Indoor allergens:

- Animals (e.g. cat or dog dander)
- Dust mites: Those allergic to dust mites experience symptoms after inhaling dust mite particles
- Insects (e.g. cockroaches)
- Latex: Those allergic to latex experience symptoms after direct exposure to the skin or inhalation
- Mold: Those allergic to mold experience symptoms after direct exposure to the skin or inhaling spores

Food allergens:

- Milk
- Egg
- Peanut
- Soy
- Wheat
- Tree nut
- Shellfish and seafood
- Fruits and vegetables
- Sesame

Seasonal allergens:

- Grass pollen
- Tree pollen
- Weed pollen

Your body's defense

Your immune system fights allergens in a similar way to how it fights bacteria, viruses and toxins. Once it identifies something as a dangerous substance, it will remember that unwelcome invader and fight it each time it shows up.

Common allergy symptoms:

- Gastrointestinal symptoms, such as stomach pain, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting (mostly common with food allergies)
- Wheezing, coughing, choking or difficult/labored breathing
- Rash or hives
- Intense itching
- Swelling
- Feeling very hot or cold
- Rising anxiety
- Pale or flushed appearance
- Stuffed, itchy or runny nose
- Sneezing
- Watery, red/itchy or swollen eyes
- Itchy or swollen throat
- Tight chest

The mystery of allergies

The allergic cycle or “cascade” is still a mystery. We don’t know why your immune system sees a harmless substance as an invader or why your allergic reactions may vary in severity — mild on one occasion and severe, even life threatening, on another occasion.



What can you do to protect yourself?

Avoiding allergies is easier said than done. Some allergens are easier to avoid than others. In instances where you can’t avoid an allergen, try your best to reduce your contact with it and know what to do during an allergic reaction by coming up with an emergency action plan.

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