



allergist

Find an allergist. Find *relief*.



FAQ for Medical Professionals on Allergists, Allergies and Asthma

Why should I refer my patients to an allergist?

Allergies and asthma are serious diseases. Misdiagnosis and mistreatment can be dangerous, even deadly. If you refer your patients to an allergist, you can be assured that they are seeing the best trained specialist and will receive quality and effective care.

What can an allergist do that another health care professional cannot?

Allergists have the training to know exactly what tests should be performed to determine the source of your patients' suffering. Patients who do not see an allergist may risk having test results misinterpreted which can lead to over-diagnosis and inappropriate management that can be harmful. It also may lead to over-prescription of medication and treatments, and costly and unnecessary allergen avoidance measures, including exclusion diets that may cause nutritional deficiency. For patients with asthma, misdiagnosis and mismanagement may lead to under-treatment which can be fatal.

When should a patient be referred to an allergist?

Any patient with allergies or asthma could benefit from seeing an allergist. Board-certified allergists are the most qualified health care professionals to

perform allergy tests and treat allergic disease and can:

- Treat more than just symptoms
- Can identify the source of a patient's suffering and develop a treatment plan to eliminate symptoms
- Provide the most cost-effective care and best outcomes

Allergists often recommend allergy shots. Are they safe?

Allergists are specialists in administering allergy shots, or immunotherapy. While the shots do require a time commitment, they don't hurt and are very safe. Allergy shots can actually alter the progression of allergies, eliminate symptoms, and prevent asthma and the development of other allergies.

National government guidelines recognize the importance of specialist care for asthma and recommend patients see an allergist if they:

- Have asthma symptoms every day and often at night that limit activity
- Have had a life-threatening asthma attack
- Do not meet asthma treatment goals after three to six months or don't respond to treatment

- Have unusual or hard to diagnose symptoms
- Have other conditions such as severe hay fever or sinusitis that complicate asthma or make it hard to diagnose
- Need more tests to find out what causes symptoms
- Need more instruction on a treatment plan, medicines or asthma triggers
- Might be helped by allergy shots
- Need treatment with a medicine called oral corticosteroids or have used this medicine more than twice in one year
- Have stayed in the hospital because of asthma
- Need help to identify asthma triggers
- Have questions about an asthma diagnosis

It's more expensive for patients to see an allergist. Is it really worth the cost?

Since an allergist is an expert in determining the appropriate tests and most effective treatment for allergic diseases, patients may not only feel better, but also may end up saving money. In fact, research shows that asthma patients under

the care of an allergist have better outcomes at less cost because of fewer emergency care visits, fewer hospitalizations, reduced lengths of hospital stays, fewer days missed from work or school, increased productivity in their work and personal lives, greater satisfaction with their care and an improved quality of life.

Where can patients get more information on asthma and allergies?

Patients can visit the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology's website, AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org for valuable information, tools to use and resources on asthma and allergies.



ACAAI American College
of Allergy, Asthma
& Immunology