



Advice From  
Your Allergist on  
**Asthma**

**allergist**

Find an allergist. Find *relief*.

[www.AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org](http://www.AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org)



## Find an allergist. Find relief.

Anyone with allergies and asthma should be able to feel good, be active all day and sleep well at night. You don't need to accept less. An allergist can help you find relief.

An allergist is a doctor who is an expert in the diagnosis and treatment of allergic diseases and conditions such as:

- Asthma and frequent cough
- Hay fever (allergic rhinitis)
- Sinus infections
- Eye allergies
- Reactions to food, insect stings and drugs
- Skin allergies, including eczema and hives
- Immune system problems that might cause frequent infections

## When should I see an allergist?

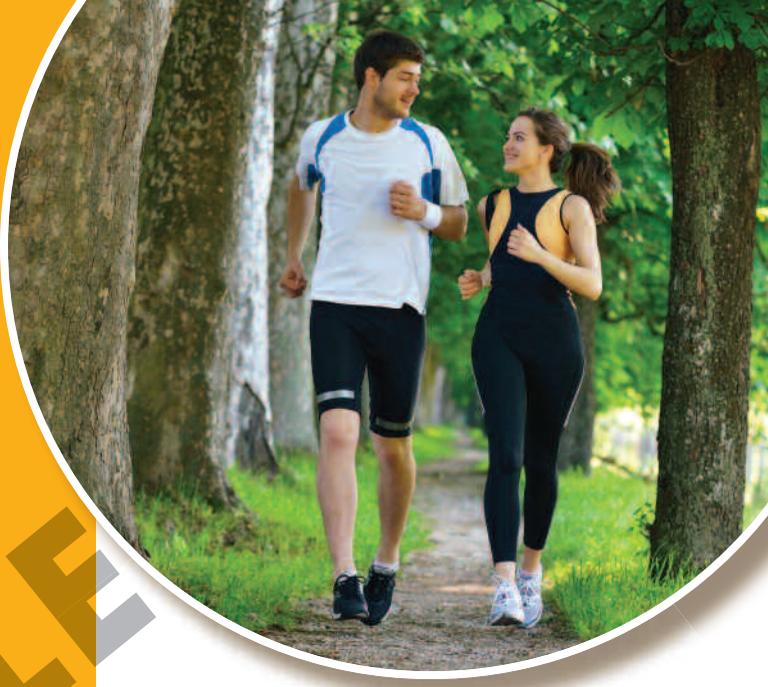
If you have any of these conditions, you should see an allergist.

Allergists treat two of the nation's most common health problems – allergies and asthma. More than 50 million people in the United States have these allergic diseases. Although symptoms may not always be severe, allergies and asthma are serious and should be treated that way. Many people with these diseases simply don't realize how much better they can feel.

## What is an allergist?

An allergist is trained to find the source of your symptoms, treat it and help you feel healthy.

After earning a medical degree, the doctor must complete a three-year residency-training program in either internal medicine or pediatrics. Then, an allergist completes two or three more years of study in the field of asthma, allergy and immunology. Look for the allergist logo to find a doctor who is an expert in treating allergies and asthma.



## About Asthma

Many people think of asthma as an "attack:" one minute you feel okay and the next you have to gasp for air. But asthma can actually cause a range of symptoms, from mild to very serious.

Perhaps you wheeze, making a squeaky or whistling sound when you breathe. You might have frequent chest colds or bronchitis a few times a year. Or maybe your only symptom is cough that wakes you up at night or happens when you exercise or laugh.

Medicine can be prescribed to control lung inflammation and reduce most asthma symptoms. However, poorly controlled asthma can be dangerous. Rarely, the progression of inflammation and airway constriction may even result in death. Fortunately, this is extremely uncommon with currently available medicine.

Allergists are doctors who have specialized training and experience to help you find out what causes your asthma. This information can help you prevent and treat symptoms and help keep your asthma under control.



more than twice a week or more than two nights a month, then your asthma is NOT well controlled. Be sure to tell your allergist.

- **Controller medicines** are taken daily for long-term control. Some people need this type of medicine to treat the quiet part of asthma — the underlying inflammation that causes the airways in the lungs to become inflamed and swollen. If your doctor prescribes this type of medicine, it should be taken every day, even when you feel well, to prevent symptoms.

### Allergy Shots

If your asthma is triggered by an allergy, you should consider allergy shots. Allergy shots, which are also known as immunotherapy, are very effective in relieving allergy symptoms and, in some cases, can actually cure your allergy.

The treatment builds up immunity to your offending allergens, usually over several years. It works by injecting small amounts of the allergen in gradually increasing amounts over time. As the shots help the body build up a tolerance to the effects of the allergen, they eventually reduce and can even eliminate your allergy symptoms. Allergy shots should only be administered by staff that has training and experience in handling a reaction you could have after receiving an allergy shot.

### Anti-IgE

Anti-IgE is a treatment that stops an allergic reaction before it begins, helping prevent asthma attacks by blocking the antibody that causes the reaction. The treatment is approved for patients age 12 and older who have moderate-to-severe allergic asthma.

Anti-IgE is different from immunotherapy but it is also given by injection. Anti-IgE should only be administered by staff that has training and experience in handling a reaction you could have after receiving an injection of anti-IgE.

### Allergists and Asthma

Studies show that people with asthma who see an allergist:

- Prevent their asthma attacks better
- Sleep through the night better
- Are more active, and even play sports
- Reduce their symptoms- daytime, nighttime and exercise-related
- Reduce their emergency room visits and hospital stays
- Reduce their visits to the doctor because they are sick
- Reduce the number of missed days from work or school
- Reduce their health care costs

They also are happier about their care and have a better quality of life.



## See an Allergist, an Asthma Specialist

Government guidelines from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) recommend seeing an asthma specialist such as an allergist if you:

- Have asthma symptoms often and at night that cause you to limit your activity
- Have had a life-threatening asthma attack
- Do not meet the goals of your asthma treatment three to six months after beginning medicine
- Are not responding to current treatment
- Have symptoms that are unusual or hard to diagnose
- Have conditions such as severe hay fever or sinusitis that complicate your asthma or your diagnosis
- Need more tests to find out more about your asthma and what causes your symptoms
- Need more help and instruction on your treatment plan, medicines or asthma triggers
- Might be helped by allergy shots
- Need treatment with a medicine called oral corticosteroids
- Have stayed in a hospital because of your asthma
- Need help to identify your asthma triggers
- Have a child under age 4 who has asthma symptoms every day and three to four nights or more a month, or a child of any age who has symptoms three days or more a week and one to two nights a month

For more information about allergies and asthma, visit:  
[www.AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org](http://www.AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org)



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