

Consult with Our Pharmacist Anytime!



ACHOO!

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Are Allergy Shots for You?

Some 50 million Americans — adults and kids — suffer from some form of allergy, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI). Allergies can develop at any age, and heredity plays a key role in determining who will have them.

An allergy occurs when the body's immune system overreacts to an otherwise harmless substance, such as pollen. Some common allergens include pollens, molds, house-dust mites, animal dander and saliva, chemicals, some foods and medicines, and insect-sting venom.

Along with medications, your doctor may recommend allergy injections, which can be started as early as the preschool years. While researchers still don't know exactly how allergy shots work, it appears the injections make the immune system more tolerant to allergens, causing the patient to react less strongly to the substances to which he or she is allergic.

Starting with a very dilute dose of allergen extract, injections are given once or twice weekly at first. The dose is then increased gradually until a maintenance dose is reached. Then shots are given about once a month. This can occur within four to six months, but it may sometimes take up to a year. Maintenance therapy may continue for three to five years or longer.

Visit www.HealthMart.com to learn more about allergies.



Caring for you and about you



DENTAL UPDATE

Choosing Your Child's Dentist

Family dentists have traditionally taken care of the entire family's teeth. But pediatric dentists, who have two to three years of additional training in working with children (including child psychology and behavior management), are becoming increasingly popular with kids and their parents.

Pediatric dentists and family dentists charge roughly the same fees, according to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. However, pediatric dentists are more prevalent in major cities. Family dentists often are easier to locate, especially in smaller towns. "Also, most generalists don't want to see patients before age three," notes Mark Smilack, D.D.S., a family dentist in Columbus, Ohio. After that age, however, "a good family dentist certainly has the experience to treat the entire family," he says.

Asthma Attack

Keep This Emergency List Near Your Phone

Asthma symptoms and attacks sometimes prompt emergency-room visits. You may want to keep the following list near your phone in case of an emergency. These suggestions are provided by the Allergy Medical Clinic, Inc., in Los Angeles:

- Keep paper and pen near the phone to record symptoms and your doctor's suggestions.
- When calling your doctor or an emergency room, first give your name and the name and age of the person having difficulty breathing.
- Ask for the doctor's or nurse's name and write it down.
- Explain why you're calling. Remember exactly which medicines were taken, as well as how much and when taken. (Keep a written record.)
- Describe symptoms. An asthma attack may include the following symptoms:
 - Sweating and unusual paleness
 - Flared nostrils when breathing in
 - Pursed lips when breathing out
 - Hunched-over posture; inability to sit or stand straight
 - Rapid heartbeat
 - No breathing sounds at all (fixed chest)
 - Vomiting
- Stay on the line while waiting for instructions, write them down and repeat them back to confirm that you heard them correctly.

Work with your doctor to create an Asthma Action Plan so you'll know what to do in case of an attack and how to prevent future attacks.



Your Pharmacist *Your Partner in Better Health*

Your pharmacist can help you make the best choices for your health. Here are a few important steps you can take to help him or her help you:

- Choose a pharmacy that meets your needs and continue to use that pharmacy. Having all your pharmacy records in one place is the best way to avoid potentially dangerous drug interactions.
- Take your medications as directed.
- Keep your pharmacist up to date on any prescription, non-prescription or herbal products you are taking.
- Talk to your pharmacist if you are unsure about how to take or store your medications or if you are having any problems with your medications.
- Ask your pharmacist to help you select non-prescription medications.

ALLERGY UPDATE

Controlling Allergens at Home

These Tips Can Help

Controlling allergens at home can go a long way toward preventing and easing allergy symptoms. Here are some tips for making your home a bit more allergen-free, courtesy of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI):

- Keep the house clean and dry to reduce mold and dust mites. Use protective covers on mattresses and pillows and regularly wash bedding in hot water to kill dust mites.
- Prevent anyone from smoking anywhere in your home.
- Keep windows closed during the pollen season, especially on windy days and in the morning when pollen counts are highest.

The AAAAI website is packed with reliable information and boasts a terrific pollen-count feature that covers the entire U.S. Check it out at www.aaaai.org.

Visit www.HealthMart.com for more information on controlling your allergies.

DID YOU KNOW?



- We hear a lot about vitamin C, but what is it, exactly? Vitamin C is an antioxidant. Antioxidants are substances that may protect your cells against the effects of free radicals. Free radicals are molecules produced when your body breaks down food, or produced by environmental exposures such as tobacco smoke and radiation. Vitamin C is important for your skin, bones and connective tissue. It promotes healing and helps the body absorb iron. It comes from fruits and vegetables. Good sources include citrus, red and green peppers, tomatoes, broccoli, and greens. Some juices and cereals have added vitamin C.

— Source: National Institutes of Health



GOT DIABETES? *Protect Your Feet*

High blood glucose from diabetes causes two problems that can hurt your feet: nerve damage and poor blood flow, according to the National Institutes of Health. If you have diabetes, you'll want to look at your feet every day to check for problems.

- **Wash your feet in warm water every day.** Dry your feet well, especially between your toes.
- **Look at your feet every day to check for cuts, sores, blisters, redness, calluses or other problems.** If you cannot bend over or pull your feet up to check them, use a mirror. If you cannot see well, ask someone else to check your feet.
- **Cut your toenails once a week or when needed.** Cut them to the shape of the toe and not too short. File the edges with an emery board.
- **Always wear slippers or shoes.** This helps to protect your feet from injuries.
- **Always wear socks or stockings to avoid blisters.** Do not wear socks or knee-high stockings that are too tight below your knee.
- **Wear shoes that fit well.** Shop for shoes at the end of the day when your feet are bigger. Break in shoes slowly.



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IS IT ALLERGIES OR A COLD?

Here's How to Tell the Difference

How do you know if you or your child are suffering from allergies or a cold? Here are some common signs of each, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Allergy:

- An itchy, runny nose, with thin, clear nasal discharge and/or a stuffy nose
- Itchy, watery eyes
- Repeated attacks of sneezing and itching of the nose, eyes or skin that lasts for weeks or months
- No fever
- Seasonal symptoms, usually in spring, summer and fall

- Dark circles ("allergic shiners") under the eyes
- Constant throat clearing
- Nighttime snoring and mouth breathing due to stuffiness
- Headache without fever

Colds:

- Stuffy nose
- Nasal discharge that is usually clear initially but can turn colored and thick
- A duration of 3 to 10 days, with or without fever
- Absence of itching

HEALTH TIP



Migraines and Menopause

Can migraines be worse during menopause? If your migraine headaches are closely linked to your menstrual cycle, menopause may make them less severe. About two-thirds of women with migraines report that their symptoms improve with menopause.

But for some women, menopause worsens migraine or triggers them to start. It is not clear why this happens. Menopausal hormone therapy, which is prescribed for some women during menopause, may be linked to migraines during this time. In general, though, the worsening of migraine symptoms goes away once menopause is complete.

— Source: www.womenshealth.gov

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