

Allergies

An allergy occurs when the body reacts to a substance. This may cause a mild to severe problem. There are different kinds of allergies. The most common allergies are to:

- Things in the air such as pollen, mold, pet dander or dust
- Things you touch such as metal, latex or chemicals
- Foods you eat or drink such as eggs, peanuts, nuts, milk, soy, wheat or shellfish
- Insect stings, such as from yellow jackets, bees, wasps, hornets or ants
- Medicines

An allergy cannot be cured, but treatment can help you feel better. The best plan is to avoid the substances that make your signs worse.

Signs

The most common signs of allergies are hives or skin rashes and wheezing or trouble breathing. **If you have trouble breathing, call 911.** Other signs depend on the cause of the allergy and may include:

- Itchy, runny or stuffy nose
- Sinus pressure
- Sneezing
- Itchy, red, swollen, burning or watery eyes
- Itchy throat or cough
- Decreased taste or smell
- Headaches
- Nausea or vomiting
- Abdominal pain or cramping
- Diarrhea
- Swelling around the mouth or trouble swallowing

Your Care

Your doctor will ask you about your signs. Skin or blood tests may be done to check for allergies. Your doctor may suggest over the counter or prescription medicines to treat your signs.

Call your doctor if you have:

- Signs that get worse or keep you from doing your normal activities
- A fever over 101 degrees F or 38 degrees C

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.