

Seasonal Allergies

Seasonal allergies, sometimes called “hay fever” or seasonal allergic rhinitis, are allergy symptoms that occur during certain times of the year. Seasonal allergies usually occur when outdoor molds release their spores, and trees, grasses, and weeds release tiny pollen particles into the air to fertilize other plants.

The immune systems of children who are allergic to these irritants treat these particles as invaders and release chemicals to defend against them. The body’s release of these chemicals, such as histamine, is what causes allergy symptoms.

Seasonal allergies can start at any age, but they most often occur initially before age 10. They reach their peak in adolescence and early twenties and subside into adulthood.

Signs and Symptoms

If your child develops a “cold” at the same time every year, especially from April thru October, seasonal allergies may be to blame.

- Sneezing
- Itchy nose and/or throat
- Nasal congestion
- Clear runny nose
- Coughing
- Itching, watery, red eyes
- Possible asthma symptoms

Seasonal allergies DO NOT cause fevers.

Diagnosis

Seasonal allergies are fairly easy to identify because the pattern of illness returns year after year. Talk to your doctor if you believe your child has seasonal allergies, most doctors can diagnosis based on symptoms, but you may be referred to an allergist for further testing.

- Skin testing
- Blood work

Children should test positive for allergies and show symptoms to the allergen for an exact diagnosis.

Treatment

- Reduce exposure to known allergens
- Air conditioning
- Air purifiers
- Medications
- Allergy shots

