

Health Beat

HEALTH, MIND & BODY

Is It Possible to Suddenly Develop Allergies?



By: Nathaniel Hare, MD
Allergist, UPMC

you're experiencing are allergies or something else. Typical symptoms associated with allergies include:

- cough from postnasal drip
- itchy and watery eyes
- nasal congestion
- sneezing
- stuffy or runny nose
- scratchy or sore throat
- throat clearing

These symptoms are also often associated with the common cold and flu and may have you overly concerned this year because of the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), especially if you have never had allergies before. While some symptoms of the coronavirus overlap with allergies, there are several differences. The nasal symptoms such as a runny nose and sinus congestion aren't prevalent symptoms of COVID-19, and allergies do not usually cause a fever, as is found with coronavirus or the flu.

If you're experiencing symptoms, it's important to talk to your doctor who can help you determine the next steps for treatment.

For those who suffer from seasonal allergies, you know that this time of year can be a challenge. Flowers, trees, and grasses are in bloom and growing which means pollen and other allergens are in the air. In the U.S., an estimated 18 million adults have hay fever or allergic rhinitis, caused by pollens, weeds, grasses, and molds. Other people may have environmental allergies to things like animals and dust mites. Did you know your allergies change and this year may be the first you experience symptoms?

Is It Allergies?

It can be challenging determining if the symptoms

What Causes You to Develop Allergies?

Allergies can develop at any point in a person's life. Usually, allergies first appear early in life and become a lifelong issue. However, allergies can start unexpectedly as an adult. A family history of allergies puts you at a higher risk of developing allergies some time in your life.

Allergies develop when your body thinks a substance such as animal hair, pollen, or mold is harmful. That substance awakens your immune system to release a chemical called histamine, which leads to your allergy symptoms. As you age, your immune system may start to weaken, so your response to an allergen also weakens. Repeated exposure can also cause your immune system to overreact. If you develop allergies as an adult, you may have had slight symptoms throughout your life, but an event such as a move or a new pet triggered your immune system to respond.

Are these Symptoms Allergies?

If you believe you have developed allergies, the first thing you can try is over-the-

counter antihistamines to help control your symptoms. It is also a good idea to avoid the things you believe you are allergic to until you can be seen by an allergist.

An allergist can perform allergy testing to determine if you have allergies and exactly what is triggering your allergy symptoms. If testing confirms you have allergies, you can work with your doctor to develop a personalized treatment plan.

How Are Allergies Treated?

The first step is to avoid the things you are allergic to and try over-the-counter antihistamines. If that doesn't work, your doctor may recommend one or more of the following options:

- Prescription antihistamines — Most antihistamines are now over the counter, but some are still only available by prescription.
- Nasal sprays — Medications that reduce the swelling in your nose, which cause a stuffy, runny, and itchy nose.
- Inhalers — Medications inhaled into the lungs

that open your airways. Inhalers can include daily use or rescue inhalers used for immediate symptom relief.

- Allergy injections or immunotherapy — A series of injections to desensitize your immune system to the allergens which trigger your symptoms. The goal of the treatment is to retrain the immune system to recognize the allergen as not dangerous, decreasing the frequency or severity of allergy

symptoms.

Allergies can be unpleasant no matter how old you are, but your doctor can help you determine what is triggering your allergies and develop a treatment plan that works for you.

Dr. Nathaniel Hare is a board certified in Internal Medicine and Allergy and Immunology. He sees patients at SH Allergy at River Avenue, 451 River Ave., Williamsport. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Hare, call 570-320-7070.

Buckheit
Funeral Chapel & Crematory, Inc.

Tioga County's
On-Site Crematory

Jacquelyn A. Buckheit
Supervisor, Owner
637 S. Main St.
Mansfield, PA 16933
Ph. 570-662-8888
Fax 570-662-1146



MANSFIELD HEARING AID CENTER

1485 South Main Street
Mansfield, PA 16933

570-513-7077

TOLL FREE 844-836-3277

Hours: Monday thru Wednesday
9-4

~ We Are Open And Accepting New Patients ~

We will continue to do curb side checkups for existing clients if you choose the option.
- Mask required to enter building



signia
Life sounds brilliant.



- Lowest Price Guarantee
- Free Testing
- Free Lifetime Aftercare
- Lithium Ion Battery With eCharger (never buy a battery again!)

"At Mansfield Hearing Aid Center and Wellsboro Hearing, we pride ourselves in offering the BEST technology for our patients at the most affordable prices! We are pleased to offer you the opportunity to hear this for yourself."



Denny Guffey,
BC-HIS

WELLSBORO HEARING

5 East Ave., Suite 107
Wellsboro, PA 16901
570-723-0977 or
570-723-0978

Fax: 570-723-0980

Hours: Thursday, Friday
9-4