# Nasal Allergies

There is no cure for nasal allergies. This handout covers the main treatments.

Nasal allergies are common in children. Symptoms may include but are not limited to runny, itchy or stuffed up nose, cough, poor sleep, and watery eyes. This handout explains things you can do where you live, medicines, and shots (injections) that can reduce allergy symptoms.

## Dust, mold and pollen allergies

- Dust and mold are the most common allergies. People with dust allergies react to dust mites. They are very tiny bugs that feed on flakes of skin (dander) from humans and animals.
- These allergies do not always show up on skin testing. Young children may have normal (negative) skin test results for dust and mold and still have a stuffy nose (nasal congestion).

## Reduce dust mites and molds where you live:

- Keep pets out of where your child sleeps, 24 hours a day. Cats and dogs sleeping where your child does increases dust mites in the mattress, pillows and blankets.
- Use dust mite-proof mattress and pillow covers where your child sleeps.
- Wash sheets once a week in hot water if you can.
- Avoid feather (down) comforters and pillows.
- Limit your child to 1 or 2 favorite stuffed animals and wash them weekly in hot water if you can.
- Avoid smoking, vaping or using incense or oil diffusers where you live.
- Remove shoes outside where you live.

## Other cleaning tips for people with allergies:

- Remove old carpet, fabric-covered furniture or curtains from where your child sleeps if you can.
- Use a vacuum or wet mop instead of a broom when possible.
- Clean heating and air conditioning ducts every 4 years and change filters every 6 months if you can.
- Many people are also allergic to a kind of dust that comes from trees and plants (pollen). Some people call this hay fever. Use air filters to help reduce pollen. Keep doors and windows closed as much as possible.
- Air filters do not get rid of dust mites.

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**To Learn More**
- Otolaryngology
  206-987-2105
- Ask your child’s healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

**Free Interpreter Services**
- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.
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### Medicines

Use these medicines only if recommend by your healthcare provider. Check with your healthcare provider first before giving any type of medicine to your child.

### Antihistamines

When your child has an allergic reaction, histamine is released in their body. Histamine causes sneezing, itching, and a watery, runny nose. Medicine that fights histamines (antihistamines) like Benadryl (diphenhydramine) will help sneezing, itching and watery, runny nose but not with feeling stuffed up all the time (chronic congestion). Antihistamines may make your child sleepy (drowsy).

Once-a-day antihistamines such as Claritin (loratadine) and Zyrtec (cetirizine) can help with chronic congestion and nighttime cough. They come in an over-the-counter liquid or pills. Usually, your child should take these once a day, at night.

### Nasal steroids

Steroids block inflammation from an allergic reaction. They can help reduce allergy symptoms including nasal congestion. Use steroid nasal sprays directly in the nose. They have no side effects when used as directed and are not addictive.

We usually prescribe an over-the-counter once-a-day spray such as Flonase (fluticasone), Nasacort (triamcinolone), and Rhinocort (budesonide). After you put the spray tip in the nostril, point it towards the outside wall of your child’s nose (towards the ear).

Nasal steroid sprays work best to prevent allergies. Use them every day for at least 4 weeks, so they work the best. If they are working, use them for 8 to 12 weeks and then stop. Once the medicine has started working, it will keep on working for several weeks after stopping use. For children with year round nasal allergy problems, try a pattern of 8 to 12 weeks using it and 3 to 4 weeks not using it.

### Allergy shots

Allergy shots (injections) work best for children with certain types of allergies, like weeds, trees, grasses and animal dander. If child continues to have problems even after cleaning where you live and trying antihistamines and nasal steroid sprays, allergy shots may work. Allergy shots are different from medicines, because your child may have a partial cure of allergy symptoms. Consider allergy shots for children who:

- Are older than 10 years
- Nasal sprays are not helping, and they have health issues such as difficult-to-control asthma
- Have skin test results that indicate shots might help