

Riverwalk Natural Health Clinic
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Allergy Season is upon us. What can you expect?

What is an allergy? An allergy is an inappropriate response by the body's immune system to a substance that is not normally harmful. In some people, the immune system wrongly identifies a nontoxic substance as an invader, and the white blood cells overreact and do more damage to the body than the invader.

What are common signs and symptoms of environmental allergies? Seasonal nasal congestion, itching, burning eyes, hives, coughing and headaches.

The most common substances that can provoke seasonal allergies in Colorado include? Trees such as Elm, Cottonwood, Cedar, Juniper, Pine and Aspen. And other plants such as ragweed, pollen, thistle, dust and sage.

Other substances that can provoke an allergy include: Nickel, cosmetics, lanolin, animal dander, dust mites, some common drugs such as penicillin, aspirin and sulfa drugs, some food additives such as benzoic acid and sulfites and chemicals found in soap and laundry detergents.

Many people are allergic to molds. Molds can live throughout the house, under the sink and in the bathroom, basement, refrigerator or any dark and damp place. Mold spores are carried in the wind and predominate in the summer and early fall. Cutting grass, harvesting crops or walking through tall vegetation can provoke a reaction.

Foods can also provoke allergic reactions. Some of the most common allergenic foods include chocolate, dairy products, eggs, shellfish, strawberries, citrus fruits, corn, wheat, food additives, preservatives and dyes.

What kind of natural treatments are available for environmental allergies? Dr. Wiancek uses homeopathy to desensitize a person from their specific environmental allergies. She also uses natural anti-inflammatory products and Chinese herbs depending upon how severe the reaction.

What is the difference between a food intolerance and food allergy? A person with a food intolerance is unable to digest and process food correctly, usually due to a lack of a certain enzyme or enzymes. A food allergy occurs when a person's immune system generates an antibody response to the ingested food. Food intolerances can lead to an allergy, if particles of undigested food manage to enter the bloodstream and cause a reaction.

What are the most common symptoms of food allergies? There are many symptoms related to food allergies these include:

Recurrent colds, sore throats, chronic tonsillitis, ear infections, ringing and buzzing in the ears, chronic nasal congestion, postnasal drip, Meniere's syndrome, constipation, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, ulcerative colitis, gallbladder disease, irritable bowel disease, migraines and other headaches, hives, canker sores, psoriasis, eczema, acne, asthma, frequent urination, teeth grinding, bedwetting, colic, muscle aches, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, unexplained fatigue, anxiety, depression, insomnia, food cravings, obesity etc.

Most of these disorders have more than one cause, but food allergy is a relatively common and frequently overlooked cause.

How is a food allergy best diagnosed? Dr. Wiancek uses a blood test, which tests 100 different foods to diagnose food allergy. A person can become allergic to almost any type of food and any combination of foods. Therefore, an accurate diagnosis is important.

Depending on how severe a person's symptoms are there are different ways to treat food allergies such as desensitizing a person, total elimination and improving digestion.

If you suspect you may have an environmental or food related allergy come on in for an assessment. Without treatment our immune system will become depleted and symptoms can become worse over time.