

Getting Relief

The cornerstone of allergy treatment is avoidance of the allergens; but that is not always possible or feasible for some people without making major changes in their lives. This is especially true of outdoor, airborne allergens.

Medical Diagnosis

The first step in getting relief starts with a visit to your doctor's office.

Knoxville Hospital & Clinics' Allergy Services are overseen by Dr. Michael Van Natta at the Knoxville Hospital Clinic.

During your visit, the doctor will ask you questions about your overall health history and symptoms. Your visit also includes an examination focusing on areas of the body affected by the allergy symptoms.

You may also have allergy testing done to identify specific substances to which you are allergic. These tests may include skin or blood tests. You may also have breathing tests or x-rays to see if your



Allergic reactions can affect the eyes, nose, throat, lungs, skin, and gastrointestinal tract.

allergies may be affecting your lungs.

Treatment Options

There are basically three ways to manage your allergies: (1) avoidance; (2) medications; and (3) allergy immunotherapy (allergy shots).

Allergy Clinic

Patients who rely on immunotherapy to help control or even eliminate allergic symptoms, receive treatment at the Allergy Clinic. The Allergy Clinic is open Tuesdays and Wednesdays and staffed by Teresa Glesener, RN.



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Allergies and Asthma impact 20% of the U.S. Population



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It's Time to Get

Relief

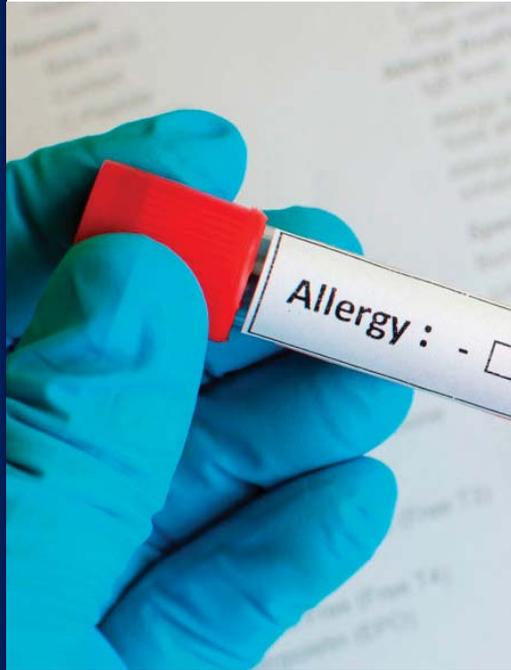
For Your Allergy Symptoms



Allergy Services



Allergic Diseases May Be Affecting Your Life in Many Ways



Symptoms

Some symptoms can be very obvious, such as sneezing on a high pollen day or after exposure to a cat. But other symptoms can be chronic (on-going), such as recurrent upper respiratory infections, bronchitis, ear infections, headaches, cough, and fatigue. These symptoms may go unrecognized as being caused by an allergy.

People with allergic diseases may not stop to think about how much allergy symptoms are affecting their lives. But if you do, you can probably think of a number of ways in which allergies affect your quality of life. In addition to the symptoms like sneezing or watery eyes, you may not be able to enjoy outdoor activities or have a pet.

Allergies can also affect you or your family in other ways, such as time lost from school or work, or cost of buying medications.

Allergens

Allergy symptoms are caused by a specific response by the immune system after exposure to a substance. Because these substances set off allergic reactions, they are called "allergens" or "triggers."

The immune system is vital to protecting us from outside threats, such as bacteria or viruses that can cause harm and disease on their own. The substances that trigger an allergic reaction in one person can be completely harmless to another non-allergic person. For this reason, many allergic reactions are like false alarms. The immune system attacks the allergen as if it is a dangerous invader, and causes symptoms and related problems.

Many types of allergens from different sources can cause allergies.

Types of Allergens	Some Examples
Outdoor	Pollen from trees, weeds, and grasses Mold spores
Indoor	House dust mites Pets Mold spores Feathers in pillows
Food	Tree nuts/peanuts Milk Eggs
Insect venom	Bee stings
Latex	Latex rubber
Medications	Penicillin Sulfa drugs
Chemical	Paints Carpeting Plastics Perfumes Cigarette smoke Plants



Understanding Allergies

Everyone seems to know someone who has allergies. People often ask, "Isn't everyone allergic to something?" Many people suffer from allergies without ever realizing that they have a treatable allergic condition.

Your Plan

What You Need to Do

1. Talk with your doctor about your allergies.
2. Understand your symptoms and allergens.
3. Get the testing you need to identify your specific allergens.
4. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.
5. Weigh the risks and benefits of the various treatments.
6. Work with your doctor to develop a treatment plan that's best for you; and stick to the plan.