

Understanding Allergies

Did you know that allergies and asthma impact 20% of the U.S. population? Many people suffer from allergies without ever realizing that they have a serious allergic condition.

What You Need to Do

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

For more information on the allergy services available at Knoxville Hospital & Clinics, please call (641) 842-7006.



For more than 80 years, Knoxville Hospital & Clinics has been helping families throughout south central Iowa and beyond. As your neighbors, your health care providers, and your community partner, our mission of *faithfully providing exceptional health care* affects every decision we make and how we care for patients and families.

As a non-profit community hospital serving Marion County and the surrounding area, we take great pride in providing exceptional care close to home. Named a Top 100 Critical Access Hospital, our highly skilled medical team provides personal, compassionate, innovative, and quality health care to our patients.

Knoxville Hospital & Clinics complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call (641) 842-1495.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al (641) 842-1495.

Knoxville Hospital & Clinics
(641) 842-2151

Pleasantville Clinic
(515) 848-3113

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(641) 628-2222



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Allergic diseases may be affecting your life in many ways

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”. Many types of allergens from different sources can cause allergies.

Types of Allergens	Some Examples
Outdoor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pollen from trees, weeds, and grasses• Mold spores
Indoor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• House dust mites• Pets• Mold spores• Feathers in pillows
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tree nuts/peanuts• Milk• Eggs
Insect venom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bee stings
Latex	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Latex rubber
Medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Penicillin• Sulfa drugs
Chemical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paints• Carpeting• Plastics• Perfumes• Cigarette smoke• Plants

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, such as recurrent upper respiratory infections, bronchitis, ear infections, headaches, cough, and fatigue. These symptoms may go unrecognizable 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 your or your family in other ways, such as time lost from work or school, or cost of buying medications.

Getting relief

The cornerstone of allergy treatment is avoidance of the allergens, but that is not always possible without making major changes in your life. This is especially true of outdoor, airborne allergens.

The first step in getting relief starts with a visit to see Allergist Dr. Ravinder Agarwal at the Knoxville Hospital & Clinics.

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

Dr. Agarwal may recommend you 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 allergies may be affecting your lungs.

Treatment options

There are three ways to manage your allergies:

1. Avoidance
2. Medications
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 at Knoxville Hospital & Clinics. The Allergy Clinic is open Tuesday and Wednesday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is staffed by Teresa Glesener, RN.

