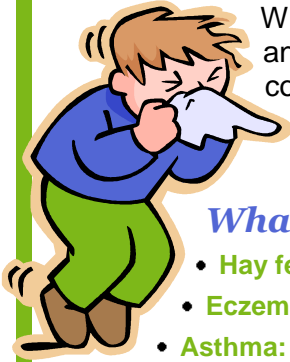


Helping Your Child Cope with Allergies & Asthma



As the seasons change, you may notice your child suffering from nasal allergies or eczema. While these conditions can make a child miserable, they are generally non-life threatening and can be controlled to some extent. However, if you notice your child developing these conditions, be on the lookout for symptoms of asthma, a more serious condition that often develops alongside allergies. Here are some tips on recognizing the symptoms of allergies and asthma and helping your child feel better:

What signs and symptoms should I be looking for?

- **Hay fever** (allergic rhinitis): runny nose, itchy, runny eyes, sneezing, and nasal congestion.
 - **Eczema**: dry, red, itchy areas on the skin.
 - **Asthma**: frequent coughing spells, wheezing, rapid breathing, and shortness or loss of breath.
- Very young children may not be able to communicate their symptoms well, so watch for **throat clearing, nose rubbing, sniffing and snorting, and scratching.**

What should I do if I think my child may have allergies, eczema, or asthma?

- Call your pediatrician. He or she may need to run some tests to determine the cause of your child's symptoms.
- Do your best to rid your house of allergens by doing the following:
 - ⇒ **Keep dust mites at bay** by regularly cleaning hard surfaces, floors, carpets, and drapes.
 - ⇒ **Wash children's bedding weekly** in hot water.
 - ⇒ If you have pets, consider finding them a new home or keeping them outside in a well-sheltered area. If the family is unwilling to do so, take extra care to **clean areas where pet dander may gather and keep pets out of the child's room.**
 - ⇒ **Eliminate and prevent mold growth** by using exhaust fans in bathrooms, drying any spills on carpets or rugs, and regularly wiping kitchen, bathroom, and laundry room surfaces with diluted chlorine bleach and water.
 - ⇒ **Keep outdoor allergens out of the house** by keeping windows closed when the pollen count is high, regularly changing air filters in central heat and air units, and using doormats to catch any leaves, grass, or dirt that may be tracked inside.
 - ⇒ **Avoid tobacco smoke, chemical fumes, fragrances, and anything else with a strong odor.** Also try not to use fireplaces and wood or coal stoves.

Our home is now spotless and allergen-free... now what?

- Depending on what your child's pediatrician has diagnosed, **your child may need to regularly take medicines for allergies and asthma and carry a rescue inhaler for acute asthma attacks.**
- **Use caution when giving over-the-counter medications to your child.** Children aren't just smaller versions of adults; their bodies react differently to certain drugs. Read drug labels and consider your child's age, medical conditions, and other medications before giving them an OTC medication.
- **Communicate with other caregivers and teachers** to make sure they are aware of your child's conditions and will know how to keep your child feeling her best while in their care.
- For additional resources and information, go to www.asthmaandallergies.org, www.fda.gov, and www.aap.org.

Sources:

[Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America](http://www.aafa.org)

[American Academy of Pediatrics](http://www.aap.org)

[U.S. Food and Drug Administration](http://www.fda.gov)

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