

# Mayo Clinic Minute: How to manage hay fever allergy symptoms

May 6 2022, by Deb Balzer

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Don't be alarmed if you are experiencing seasonal allergies for the first time. While hay fever—also known as allergic rhinitis—often begins in childhood, more adults are being diagnosed, according to the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention.

Dr. Jay-Sheree Allen, a Mayo Clinic family medicine physician, says [seasonal allergies](#) can make you feel miserable. It's your body's way of fighting off a perceived threat.

"Your [immune system](#) can overreact or create antibodies to fight things that aren't necessarily as harmful as it thinks," says Dr. Allen.

Think of it as an overreaction to foreign bodies, like pollen or ragweed.

Dr. Allen says that's what causes symptoms you'd experience, like a runny nose, watery eyes and sneezing.

Triggers include exposure to tree, grass and weed pollens, and other plants. Allergies can't be cured, but often symptoms can be relieved.

Dr. Allen says to try to:

- Avoid exposure.
- Use a nasal rinse.
- Take decongestants to help.
- Ensure that the air around you is clean.

"Maybe you need a filter in your home. And sometimes a humidifier can be very helpful if it's really bad," she says.

And see an allergy specialist for treatment options if you don't get relief.

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