



## **Allergic Rhinitis**

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Pollen season is fast upon us. Almost 30% of people in the Western world suffer from environmental allergies. Many people are unaware of how severely allergies can adversely affect their health and daily living. In adults nasal congestion can cause sleep apnea, daily headaches, depression, daytime fatigue, poorly controlled asthma, and even difficulty concentrating. In children, nasal congestion and chronic mouth breathing can also contribute to the development of craniofacial abnormalities, problems with dentition, and even slowed or impaired learning. Many people never make the connection between these health problems and their allergies. This is one of the reasons why allergies are currently the leading medical cause of lost work and school in the country. With the proper medication, treatment, and information, allergies can quickly become a non-issue in your life. For starters, it is very important that you know the temporal relationship of your particular hypersensitivities. For example, many people are only allergic to tree pollen. If this were the case, you would only need to take allergy medication during the spring months. Of note, grasses pollinate in the summer and weeds pollinate in the fall. Many people, because they are unaware of their particular allergies, mistakenly take their allergy medications year round. More often than not, this is unnecessary. If you are allergic to the pets living in your home, you may then need to remain on allergy medications for the entire year. Another treatment option is allergen desensitization (allergy shots) for people who have perennial allergies, a prolonged allergy season, or are intolerant to medications.

This offers a more permanent solution to your annual suffering. Whatever the nature of your allergies, identification of the problem, combined with a well thought out treatment plan, will help you lead a happier and healthier life. Remember breathe better, live better!