

Allergic Rhinitis



Why does my child have allergic rhinitis?

Most allergies are due to a combination of genetic and environmental factors. This means that there is often a family member with asthma, allergic rhinitis or eczema.

What are the usual triggers of allergic rhinitis?

House dust mite allergens are the most common triggers locally. These are microscopic creatures that commonly reside in the home. Other triggers include pollen (most common in temperate climate) and animal dander. Food is rarely a trigger.



How is allergic rhinitis diagnosed?

Your child's doctor may suggest an allergy test to confirm the diagnosis of allergic rhinitis and determine what your child is allergic to. This is important because the treatment of allergic rhinitis is different from the treatment of non-allergic rhinitis. Skin prick test is the most useful and commonly performed test. Refer to our pamphlet on "Facts about Allergy Tests" to find out more about skin prick test.

How is allergic rhinitis treated?

Like most allergies, it is treated by allergen avoidance and the use of medications. Allergen immunotherapy can also help with the treatment of this condition.

A. Allergen avoidance

- If your child is allergic to house dust mite allergens, wash your bedding (bedsheets, pillowcases and covers) in hot water that is 60°C weekly or fortnightly. Minimise the use of carpets or thick curtains. The house should be kept dust-free by damp cleaning. Vacuum only when your child is not at home and let the air settle for about 2 hours before allowing him or her to enter the room. Mite-proof bedcovers and acaricides (pesticides for mites) may be helpful.
- If your child is allergic to pet allergens, avoidance of the animal is recommended. However, it is advisable to have a proper allergy test and consultation with your child's doctor before doing so. If avoidance of the pet is not possible, reduce exposure by preventing it from entering your child's bedroom.

B. Medications for allergic rhinitis

- Antihistamines are safe and effective even in very young children. They sometimes need to be taken over a prolonged period of time. Some may cause your child to be sleepy. If you notice that the medication makes your child sleepy, please let his or her doctor know; changing the antihistamine may address this side effect.
- Topical steroids such as nasal sprays are often prescribed. These are generally safe and should be used as prescribed over a period of time. They are particularly helpful in reducing nasal blockage or congestion.
- Allergen immunotherapy can be prescribed in some children as long as they are 5 years of age and above. Please discuss this with your child's doctor.
- If you wish to reduce the medications being used, it is advisable to discuss this and follow up with your child's doctor. Some medications take a longer time to wear off than others. Some children with allergic rhinitis may suffer from poorer quality of life and be at higher risk of complications if left untreated, as compared to others.



Will allergic rhinitis develop into asthma?

Allergic rhinitis and asthma can co-exist, so it is not surprising that someone with allergic rhinitis may be diagnosed with asthma. However, the presence of allergic rhinitis does not mean your child will definitely develop asthma.

Your child has been diagnosed with allergic rhinitis...

This means that he or she has an allergy (likely related to house dust mites) and is prone to sneezing, runny nose, itchy nose and/or congestion of the nose.

Some children with allergic rhinitis may have a cough that is worse at night. This can be due to concomitant asthma or a condition called “post-nasal drip”. The latter is due to the nasal secretions running to the back of the throat and irritating it.

Some children also have itching of the eyes, which leads to rubbing of the eyes, occasional swelling of the eyelids and red eyes when the child does not have a fever or flu. This can also be related to house dust mite allergy.



About the Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children’s Medical Institute (KTP-NUCMI)

The KTP-NUCMI is the paediatric arm of the National University Hospital and comprises the Departments of Paediatrics, Paediatric Surgery and Neonatology. We provide comprehensive and specialised medical and surgical services for newborns, children and adolescents, and are the only public hospital in Singapore that offers paediatric kidney and liver transplant programmes. Through a generous gift from the Estate of Khoo Teck Puat, we have set up an integrated outpatient facility with medical, diagnostic and rehabilitation services.

For more information about us, visit www.nuh.com.sg/nuhkids.

Contact Us

24-hour Children’s Emergency

Location: NUH Main Building, Zone F, Level 1
General Enquiry: +65 6772 2555

KTP-NUCMI

Location: NUH Main Building, Zone E, Level 2 (Accessible via Kent Ridge Wing, Zone C, Level 2, Lift Lobby C)
Operating Hours: 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri), 8.30am – 12.30pm (Sat)
General Enquiry: +65 6772 5736 Appointment Line: +65 6772 2002
Fax: +65 6776 2102 Email: ktpnucmi_appt@nuhs.edu.sg

9a Viva-University Children’s Cancer Centre

Location: NUH Medical Centre, Zone B, Level 9
Operating Hours: 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri) Appointment Line: +65 6772 5030
Fax: +65 6872 4314 Email: cbccappt@nuhs.edu.sg

NUH Children’s Urgent Care Clinic @ Bukit Panjang

Location: Junction 10, 1 Woodlands Road, #01-22, Singapore 677899
Operating Hours: 9am – 11pm daily (including public holidays)
General Enquiry: +65 6219 1538 Email: childreucc@nuhs.edu.sg
Website: www.nuh.com.sg/ucc

NUH Child Development Unit @ JMC

Location: Jurong Medical Centre, 60 Jurong West Central 3, Level 2, Singapore 648346
Operating Hours: 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri) Appointment Line: +65 6665 2530/2531
Fax: +65 6665 0158 Email: cdu@nuhs.edu.sg
Website: www.nuh.com.sg/cdu

NUH Child Development Unit @ Keat Hong

Location: Keat Hong Community Club, 2 Choa Chu Kang Loop, #03-01, Singapore 689687
Operating Hours: 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri) Appointment Line: +65 6769 4537/4637
Fax: +65 6665 0158 Email: cdu@nuhs.edu.sg
Website: www.nuh.com.sg/cdu

National University Hospital

Location: 5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074
Tel: +65 6779 5555 Email: NUH_enquiries@nuhs.edu.sg
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