

# HealthSmart It's Allergy Season! Itching, sneezing, & wheezing. Oh My!



## What Are Allergies?

Allergies are an overreaction of the immune system to a substance that causes irritation. These substances can trigger sneezing, wheezing, coughing and itching. Allergies not only affect daily life, they can also lead to chronic respiratory illnesses such as sinusitis and asthma. Allergic reactions can range from a simple sneeze to a life threatening condition. Many of these reactions occur from drugs, food, insect bites, pollen, animal dander, and more.



## Common Allergic Diseases

### Allergic asthma

- Asthma symptoms that are triggered by an allergic reaction: coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath or rapid breathing, chest tightness, occasional fatigue, and slight chest pain

### Anaphylaxis

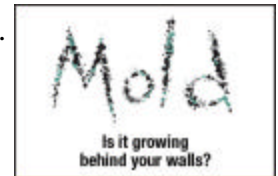
- Most severe reaction which causes life threatening symptoms that can progress into irregular heart beat, seizure, shock, and respiratory distress.



## Causes of Allergies

Substances that cause allergic disease are known as allergens. Allergens are the substance that will induce the allergic reaction. Allergens can enter the body in many ways, they may be:

- inhaled in the nose and lungs
- ingested by mouth
- injected (medications)
- absorbed through skin



## Seasonal Allergy - Pollen

Plant pollens that are carried by the wind will cause more allergies of the nose, eyes, and lungs. Plants, like certain weeds, trees and grasses, produce pollutants at various times of the year. These are smaller, hidden, and discharge billions of pollen particles. It is important to pay attention to the condition within your area and over the current region and/or state where you live.

