



Allergies



Overview

Your doctor says you have an "allergy." Maybe you can't be around something, like hay or cats. Maybe you have to be careful about what you eat. Or you've been told a bee sting could be very dangerous for you. But what is an allergy, exactly?

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Well, when we say you have an allergy, what we mean is that your body reacts strongly to something that really should be harmless. If you get too close to it (like if you touch it or breathe it in or swallow it), an alarm goes off inside you. Your body tries to protect itself, even though it doesn't really need to.

What happens inside you

What kinds of things happen? Well, it depends on the type of allergy you have. Let's say you're allergic to hay. When you're around it, your eyes may get itchy and watery. You may sneeze and cough.

Anaphylactic shock

But some allergies are much more dangerous. If you're allergic to peanuts and you eat one, your throat could swell and make it hard for you to breathe. If you're allergic to bee stings, a sting could make your heart beat fast and cause you to faint. We would need to rush you to the hospital.

Staying safe

Nobody likes allergies, but many people have them. They don't keep you from doing most of the things you like to do. Your doctor will tell you what you need to do to stay safe.

