




# Allergies or something else?



It's that time of year again. Your eyes itch, your nose is runny, you sneeze constantly and your head is congested—all-too-familiar symptoms for the estimated 18.6 million Americans who suffer from allergic rhinitis or hay fever. But when you're used to coping with miserable symptoms from spring through fall, how do you know when you're really sick? Call your doctor any time your symptoms worsen, your medication no longer provides relief or you develop new symptoms such as a rash or wheezing. Key warning signs that your symptoms are not from your allergies include fever, body aches, yellow or green nasal discharge and malaise.

Use the chart below to see whether your ah-choo is from allergies ... or something else.

**We're here to help!**  
 To find a physician, visit [northside.com](http://northside.com) or call (404) 851-8817.

Area of discomfort	It may be an allergy if you experience ...	It may not be an allergy if you experience ...	It could be ...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Sneezing, sinus congestion, clear nasal discharge</li> <li>→ Heavier symptoms in the spring and fall, which suggest sensitivity to outdoor allergens like tree, grass and weed pollen</li> <li>→ Year-round symptoms that may also include cough, headache or facial pain, which suggest sensitivity to indoor allergens like dust mites, mold and pet dander</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Fever, body aches, sore throat and thick, colored nasal discharge</li> <li>→ Sinus pain, fatigue, head and ear congestion, toothache and bad-tasting postnasal drip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ An upper-respiratory infection such as a cold, flu or sinusitis. A cold will pass in about seven to 10 days, and the flu lasts a week or two; sinusitis can last longer</li> <li>→ Nonallergic irritation caused by pollution, strong smells, aerosol sprays and smoke or changes in temperature, humidity and air pressure</li> <li>→ Hormonal changes during menstruation or pregnancy</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Itchy, watery eyes, redness, swelling or dark under-eye circles (allergic shiners), which suggest allergies or allergic conjunctivitis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ A thick, yellow discharge that crusts over the eyes, especially during sleep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Conjunctivitis caused by a virus or bacteria</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Wheezing, coughing, mucus and other asthma-like symptoms, which can be triggered by an allergy to pollen, mold, dust mites, animal dander or certain foods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Increased difficulty breathing</li> <li>→ A continual cough that produces large amounts of mucus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Asthma</li> <li>→ Emphysema</li> <li>→ Chronic bronchitis</li> </ul>