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YOUTH HEALTH BULLETIN

APRIL 2011

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ALL ABOUT ALLERGIES

Do you start sneezing more than usual in the fall? What about in the spring? What happens when you go near your friend's dog? Maybe you get a runny nose or your eyes start to water. These are responses to the world around you and are called allergies.

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An allergy (say: al-ur-jee) is the body's reaction to certain plants, animals, foods, or other things. The immune system protects us from harmful objects in the environment, but sometimes it tries to "fight" common things. This fight causes sneezing, a runny nose or watery eyes, or even all three!

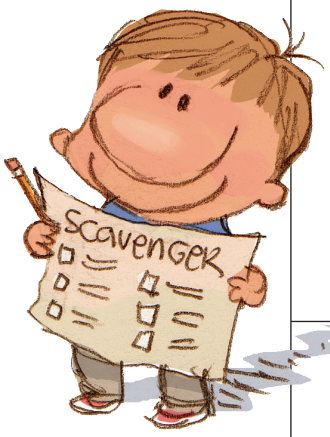
Common allergies

- **Foods** – Many people have allergies for only one type of food. Common food allergies may be milk, wheat, soy, nuts, eggs, and seafood.
- **Plants** – These include flowers, trees, and grass.
- **Animals** – Some people react to the animal's dry skin, saliva (spit), or hair.

Symptoms

If you have allergies you may have several of these symptoms or you may have only one or two.

- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Itchy eyes
- Watery eyes
- Sore throat



If you have food allergies you may have some of these symptoms:

- Hives (red itchy bumps)
- Stuffy nose
- Stomach cramps
- Vomiting

Some allergies may cause shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

Food allergies can occur all year long, but some plant allergies may peak only in the fall or the spring. Each person is different.

How do I control an allergy

Talk to your parents and your doctor about symptoms you are experiencing. Your doctor may tell you to stay away from the cause of your

allergy. Your doctor may prescribe allergy medicines such as pills, liquids, or even nose sprays. Make sure to follow your doctor's instructions regarding taking your medicine.

Unfortunately, many medicines do not help food allergies. People with food allergies have to stay away from the allergic foods. However, many kids grow out of food allergies.

If you think you have allergies make sure you talk to your parents!

If you have outdoor allergies, you may not be able to spend time outside like you would want. Here are a few activities you can do indoors:

- Turn on some music and dance
- Build a fort
- Play hide and seek
- Create a scavenger hunt

REFERENCES:

- Kids Health. "Learning about allergies" The Nemours Foundation. Nov. 2007. http://www.kidshealth.org/

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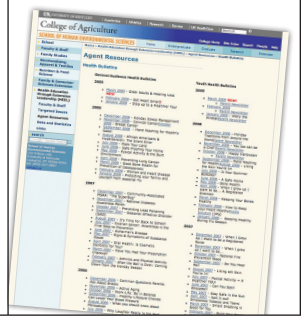

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