

WellnessWatch



Welcome to WellnessWatch -- The Starr Group's monthly digest featuring articles on #health and #wellness awareness. Be well!



Topic of the Month:

All About Allergies

Do you suffer from allergies? You are far from alone. More than 50 Million Americans have experience various types of allergies each year. That's a lot! When you hear someone say they have allergies, for most, the first thing that comes to mind is your basic seasonal allergies. Well, that is not always the case. There are a variety of allergies, not to mention

some basic differences between an allergy, a sensitivity, and an intolerance.

An **allergy** is identified by an immune system reaction to a substance. Anaphylaxis (allergies that are life-threatening) can result if not diagnosed and/or left untreated. The most common triggers for anaphylaxis are medicines, food and insect stings.¹

A **sensitivity** -- while presenting a physical reaction -- can mimic an allergy but has no dangerous immune system response to a particular matter. While it is not life-threatening, but it can create discomfort.

An **intolerance** is a lack of a chemical or enzyme needed to digest certain food. It is not life-threatening, however, a reaction could be uncomfortable at best, and painful at worst. You can avoid certain foods or may be able eat them in very small amounts. Some episodes of intolerance can be treated with medicines.



Did you know?



- Allergies are the 6th leading cause of chronic illness in the U.S.
- Annual cost of allergies exceeds \$18 billion.¹
- People visit the emergency room about 200,000 times each year because of food allergies.



THINK ABOUT THIS: In 2015, African-American children in the U.S. were more likely to have skin allergies than white children. While, white children were more likely to have hay fever than African-American children.²

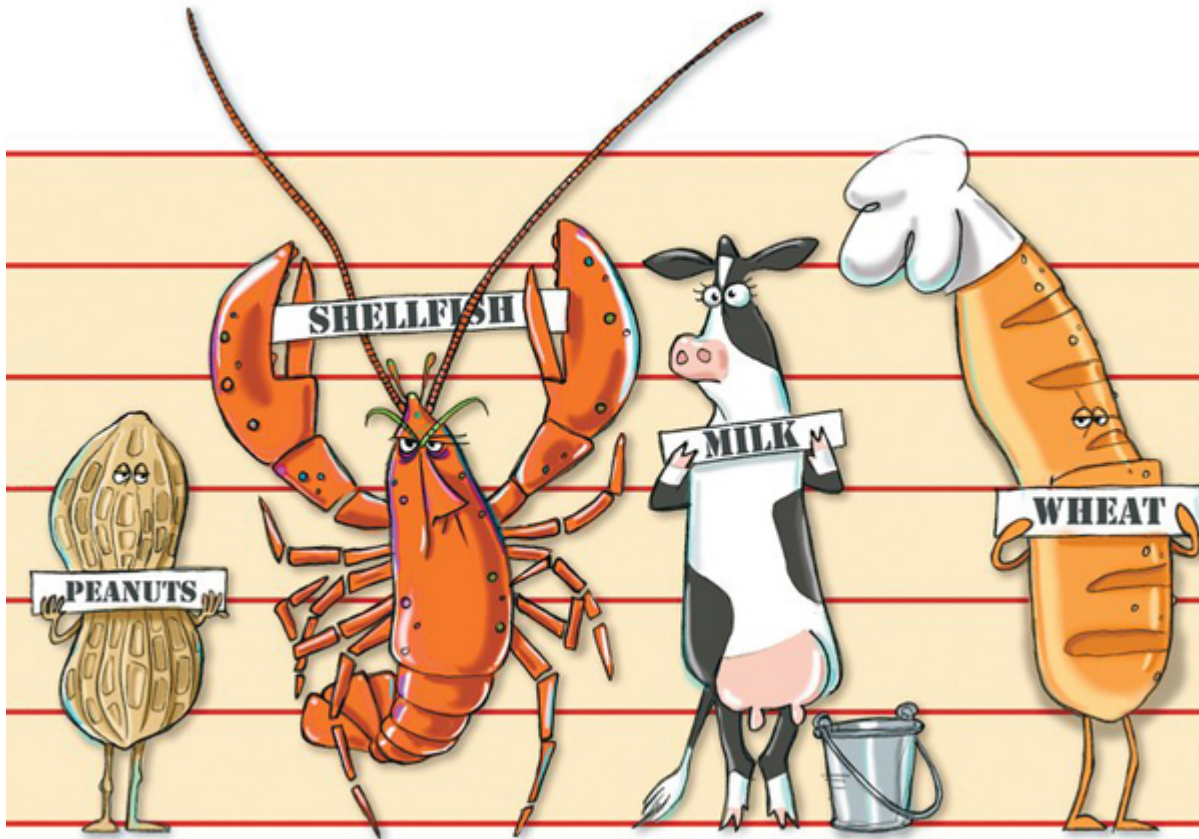


Know your Symptoms and their Triggers

Indoor and Outdoor Allergies: Indoor and outdoor allergy symptoms include sinus swelling, seasonal and returning allergies, hay fever and nasal allergies. Many people with allergies often have more than one type of allergy. The most common indoor/outdoor allergy triggers are: tree, grass and weed pollen, mold spores, dust mites, cockroaches, and cat, dog and rodent dander.

Allergic Rhinitis (aka, Hay Fever) affects 6.1 million of the children population and 20 million of the adult population.^{2,1} Immunotherapy (allergy shots) helps reduce symptoms in about 85 percent of people.¹

Skin Allergies: Skin allergy symptoms include skin inflammation, eczema, hives, chronic hives and contact allergies. Plants like poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac are the most common skin allergy triggers. But skin contact with cockroaches and dust mites, certain foods or latex may also cause skin allergy symptoms. In 2015, 8.8 million children had skin allergies.² Children between newborn and age 4 years are most likely to have skin allergies.²



Food Allergies: Children have food allergies more often than adults. The eight foods that commonly cause most food allergy reactions are milk, soy, eggs, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish. Peanut is the most common allergen followed by milk and shellfish.³ In 2015, 4.2 million children under age 18 in the US had food allergies.²

Drug Allergies: Serious reactions to pharmaceuticals may affect 10 percent of the world's population. These reactions affect up to 20 percent of all hospital patients.¹ Penicillin is the most common allergy trigger for those with drug allergies. Up to 10 percent of people report being allergic to this common antibiotic.⁴

Latex Allergies: Health care workers are becoming more concerned about latex allergies. About 8-12 percent of healthcare workers will get a latex allergy. About 1 to 6 percent of people in the U.S. have a latex allergy.⁵

Insect Allergies: People who have insect allergies are often allergic to bee and wasp stings and poisonous ant bites. Cockroaches and dust mites may also cause nasal or skin allergy symptoms. Insect sting allergies affect 5 percent of the population.⁶ At least 90-100 deaths occur each year in the United States due to insect sting anaphylaxis.⁷



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