



PERSISTENT RHINITIS



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WHAT ARE THE COMMONLY USED TREATMENTS?

The following treatment options are for allergic rhinitis - the most common cause of persistent rhinitis. Non-allergic rhinitis can be more difficult to treat and depends on the cause. Steroid nasal sprays may be helpful.

The commonly used treatment options for allergic rhinitis are avoiding the cause of the allergy, antihistamine nose sprays, antihistamine tablets and steroid nose sprays.

Note: if your rhinitis symptoms are not controlled on the medication that you are taking after 2-4 weeks, you should discuss this with your doctor. You may need to try a different treatment or add in another treatment.

HOW LONG IS TREATMENT NEEDED FOR?

Persistent rhinitis is an ongoing (chronic) condition that usually needs regular treatment to prevent symptoms. However, over time the condition may ease and even go completely in some cases.

It may be worth stopping treatment every six months or so to see if symptoms come back without the treatment. The treatment can be started again if symptoms return.

ARE THERE ANY COMPLICATIONS OF PERSISTENT RHINITIS?

Yes, can cause Sinusitis and Nasal Polyposis.

RHINITIS

Rhinitis means inflammation of the nose. Common symptoms include sneezing, a blocked or congested nose, a runny nose (watery discharge) and an itchy nose, red eyes. The most common cause of rhinitis is a cold.

Hay fever is another common cause. Rhinitis affects both nostrils at the same time.

PERSISTENT RHINITIS

This means that rhinitis symptoms continue long-term. One definition that doctors use for persistent rhinitis is rhinitis symptoms that last for an hour or more on most days of the year.

However, in practice there is great variation. In many cases the symptoms are present for some part of the day on most days. In some cases the symptoms come and go.

WHAT CAUSES PERSISTENT RHINITIS?

The causes of persistent rhinitis can be divided into allergic and non-allergic. An allergic cause for persistent rhinitis is the most common.

PERSISTENT ALLERGIC RHINITIS

The most common cause of persistent rhinitis is an allergy to the house dust mite. However, allergy to pets or other animals is also common.

Note: the thing that causes an allergy (house dust mite, dead animal skin, etc) is often known as the allergen.

Hay fever (caused by an allergy to pollen) is another type of allergic rhinitis. However, hay fever tends to be seasonal and not persistent because it occurs during a particular period each year

Symptoms of allergy in the nose are due to the immune system reacting to the

allergen (such as pollen or house dust mite droppings).

Cells in the lining of the nose release histamine and other chemicals when they come into contact with the allergen. This causes inflammation in the nose (rhinitis) and the typical symptoms.

PERSISTENT NON-ALLERGIC RHINITIS

There can be various other causes or triggers for persistent rhinitis. These triggers can cause a rhinitis in their own right but they can also make symptoms worse if you already have an allergic rhinitis. They include the following:

- Irritation of the nose by smoke, strong smells, fumes, chemicals, changes in temperature or humidity.
- Hormonal changes during pregnancy and puberty, which can sometimes cause nose symptoms.
- If you have an overactive thyroid gland, this can also sometimes lead to rhinitis.
- Food and drink - mainly hot, spicy food, or alcohol. Sensitivity to certain food colourings or preservatives may be a cause.
- Emotion such as stress or sexual arousal can sometimes affect the nose.
- Medication - a side-effect from certain medicines is a rare cause. These include beta-blocker medicines, aspirin and other anti-inflammatory medicines, angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, the contraceptive pill and chlorpromazine.
- Rhinitis medicamentosa is the name given to rhinitis that can occur due to the overuse of nasal decongestant sprays. These sprays are used to help a blocked nose and they reduce swelling of blood vessels in your nose. However, if they are used for more than 5-7 days, the swelling can recur again.

The temptation is to use yet more

decongestant and a vicious circle can be set up.

In some people, no specific trigger for their persistent rhinitis may be found. This is called idiopathic rhinitis. Idiopathic means that there is no certain cause that has been found.

WHO GETS PERSISTENT RHINITIS?

Persistent rhinitis is common. It can affect anyone of any age although it affects adults more commonly than children. It is becoming increasingly common in older people.

Many people with persistent rhinitis say they have a persistent cold. However, colds are due to viral infections and normally only last a week or so. Persistent rhinitis is not due to an infection.

Allergic rhinitis (be it hay fever or persistent rhinitis) tends to run in families. You are also more likely to develop allergic rhinitis if you already have asthma or eczema. Equally, if you have allergic rhinitis, you are more likely to develop eczema or asthma. The conditions asthma, eczema and allergic rhinitis are known together as a topic conditions or atopy. A tendency to atopy can run in families.

ARE ANY TESTS NEEDED?

Usually not. Most cases are due to allergy and the symptoms are usually typical. Your doctor can usually diagnose allergic persistent rhinitis by talking to you about your symptoms and your medical history. They may also examine your nose.



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