

What is Causing Your Allergy? Frequently Asked Questions

This document has been developed by [ASCIA](#), the peak professional body of clinical immunology/allergy specialists in Australia and New Zealand. ASCIA information is based on published literature and expert review, is not influenced by commercial organisations and is not intended to replace medical advice. For patient or carer support contact [Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia](#) or [Allergy New Zealand](#).

Q 1: Why is it important to keep a record of symptoms?

The first step in the management of allergic disease is identifying the allergen/s causing the problem. In some cases, medical evaluation using allergy tests may be needed to confirm the cause of allergy. Steps can be taken to reduce or avoid exposure to the allergen/s when it is identified. Keeping a record of symptoms is important as it can help identify the allergen/s triggering allergy.

Q 2: How can you keep a record of allergy symptoms?

The questions below may be helpful when keeping a record of allergy symptoms:

- Do symptoms occur when you are inside the house, outside the house or both inside and outside?
- Are symptoms worse at night or during the day?
- Do you wake up with symptoms in the morning?
- Do you only get symptoms at certain times of the year?
- Does exposure to animals cause symptoms?
- Do you think that any foods or drinks cause symptoms?

These ASCIA forms can be used by patients or carers to keep a history of symptoms and exposure to possible allergens:

Clinical History Form - www.allergy.org.au/hp/anaphylaxis/clinical-history-form-allergic-reactions

Event Record for Allergic Reactions - www.allergy.org.au/hp/anaphylaxis/anaphylaxis-event-record

Q 3: When should you seek medical advice?

If you suspect an allergy, visit your doctor or pharmacist for advice. Allergy tests may be needed to help confirm or exclude the cause of allergy symptoms. Some people may be referred to a clinical immunology/allergy specialist for further tests and treatment.

Diagnosing an allergy requires medical advice as the symptoms may be similar to other conditions. For example:

- Many people have a repeated sore throat and runny nose which they think is a recurrent cold when they may be suffering from allergic rhinitis (hay fever).
- Allergy may occur with other conditions such as asthma.
- Allergy symptoms can include an upset stomach and/or skin rashes.

© ASCIA 2024

Content updated March 2024

For more information go to www.allergy.org.au/patients/allergy-testing

To support allergy and immunology research go to www.allergyimmunology.org.au/donate