

## Who should **TREAT** my **Allergies?**

**A**n Otolaryngic Allergist is able to diagnose and treat disorders of the upper respiratory tract (ear, nose, throat etc.) caused by allergic conditions. Because the Otolaryngic Allergist is an ear, nose, and throat surgeon and specialist (ENT), other non-allergic diseases of the upper respiratory tract can also be efficiently diagnosed and treated.

Half of the problems that an ENT doctor encounters are probably caused, either directly or indirectly, by allergy. Chronic nasal congestion and post nasal drip, seasonal or constant, is often allergic and may be complicated by chronic sinus and middle ear disease. Hearing loss, dizziness, head-aches, weeping ear canals and chronic sore throats may be due to allergy.

The ENT doctor who does his/her own allergy treatment is able to follow the patient's progress with specialized examinations and medical and surgical treatment, such as polyp removal, placement of middle ear ventilating tubes, straightening of the nasal septum, and treatment of sinus infections.

## The American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy

The American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy

(AAOA) is a group of specialty physicians

dedicated to the quality care of patients with

allergies of the ears, nose, and throat.

They are board certified specialists

in Otolaryngology (ear, nose, and throat).

Members of the **AAOA** may attain the designation of Fellow (**FAAOA**) by meeting certain requirements, including passing a detailed examination covering the practice of Otolaryngic Allergy.

*For more information about current Allergy Practice, please ask your Doctor or contact:*

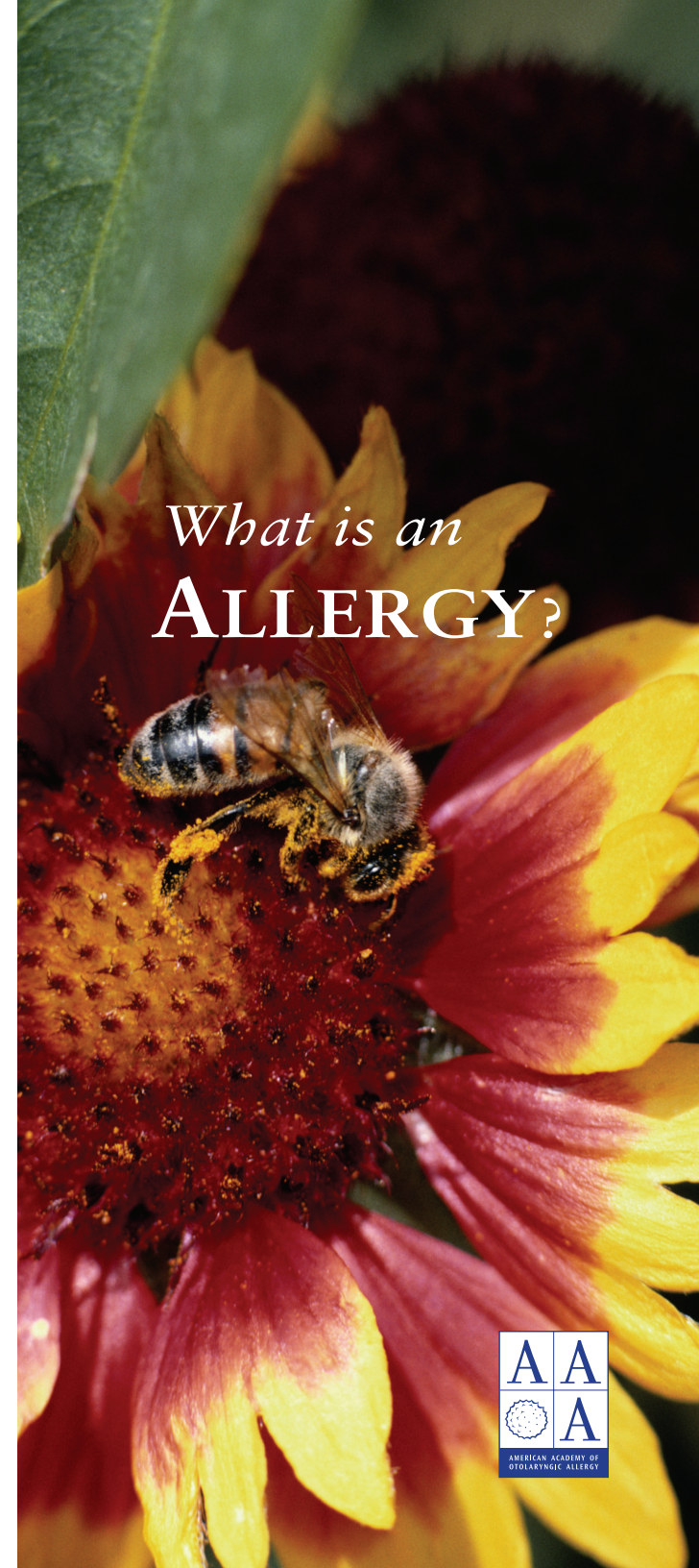
### THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OTOLARYNGIC ALLERGY



**11130 Sunrise Valley Road  
Suite 100  
Reston, Virginia 20191**

**202.955.5010 | phone  
202.955.5016 | fax  
aaoaf@aaoaf.org**

## *What is an* **ALLERGY?**





## What is an **ALLERGY**?

**A**llergy is a condition, often inherited, in which the immune system of the affected person reacts to something that is either eaten, touched, or inhaled that doesn't affect most other people. The patient's immune system reacts to this substance as if it were an "enemy invader" (like a virus). This reaction leads to symptoms that often adversely affect the patient's work, play, rest, and overall quality of life.

### **Allergens Cause Allergies**

Any substance that triggers an allergic reaction is called an allergen. Allergens "invade" the body by being inhaled, swallowed or injected, or they may be absorbed through the skin. Common allergens include pollen, dust and mold.

### **How Common are Allergies?**

Allergies are among the nation's most common and costly health problems. They affect as many as one in four people. More than 50 million Americans have allergic rhinitis. The yearly sales of antihistamines, decongestants, nasal cromolyn and nasal corticosteroids now exceeds \$5 billion.

## What are the Symptoms of **Ear, Nose and Throat Allergies?**

People often think of allergy as only "hay fever," with sneezing, runny nose, nasal stuffiness and itchy, watery eyes. However, allergies can also cause symptoms such as chronic "sinus" problems, excess nasal and throat drainage (post nasal drip), head congestion, frequent "colds," hoarse voice, eczema (skin allergies), recurring ear infections, hearing loss, dizziness, chronic cough and asthma. Even stomach and intestinal problems as well as excessive fatigue can be symptoms of allergy. Symptoms of ear, nose, and throat allergies may include:

- \* Repeated sneezing
- \* Nasal itching and rubbing
- \* Nasal congestion
- \* Runny nose
- \* Dark circles under the eyes
- \* Crease across bridge of nose
- \* Frequent throat clearing
- \* Mouth breathing
- \* Diminished/lost sense of smell/taste
- \* Recurrent, unexplained nosebleeds
- \* Recurrent ear infections
- \* Recurrent sinus infections
- \* Fluctuating hearing loss
- \* Cold-like symptoms more than 10 days
- \* Symptoms recur same time each year
- \* Chronic fatigue
- \* Symptoms can range from minor to severe.

The greater the frequency and/or amount of exposure, the greater the chance that the susceptible person will develop an allergic problem that will require treatment.



### **What causes Symptoms to Begin?**

There is no "usual" way for an allergy to begin; the onset may be sudden or gradual. Often, symptoms develop following an unusual stress to the immune system, such as a severe viral infection.

### **Can an Allergy be Outgrown?**

No, but it is common for people to change the way their allergic symptoms affect them. For example, a baby may develop colic, recurrent ear infections, or have eczema, but as it grows older, it may develop different allergic symptoms such as hay fever, fluid behind the eardrum, or asthma.

### **How do we make the Diagnosis?**

The initial or presumptive diagnosis of allergy is made by history and physical examination. If one wishes to be certain of the diagnosis and proceed to treat the patient effectively, the findings must be confirmed by tests that identify the specific offending allergens.

### **Who can treat my Ear, Nose, and Throat Allergies?**

Because allergies can produce such a wide range of symptoms, there are a number of doctors, both specialists and primary care physicians, who may be qualified to treat the allergic patient.



# What is an AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OTOLARYNGIC ALLERGY (AAOA) FELLOW?

**A** Fellow of the AAOA is recognized for having successfully completed specific educational and clinical requirements as outlined by the **American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy (AAOA)**.

The **AAOA** is an organization of specialty physicians dedicated to the quality care of patients with allergic diseases of the upper respiratory tract.

The diagnosis and management of medical and surgical disorders of the head and neck is fundamental to the core of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery. The 1998 Scope of Knowledge update to the American Board of Otolaryngology reaffirmed that the diagnosis and treatment of allergic disorders of the head and neck is a fundamental part of the knowledge base of the practicing otolaryngologist. Allergic conditions of the ear, nose, paranasal sinuses, larynx and trachea are encountered daily by the otolaryngic practitioner. In addition, immunologic conditions affecting the ears, salivary glands, thyroid and lymphatic system must also be included in this fundamental core\*.

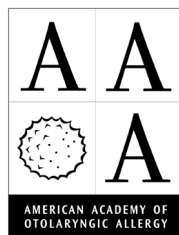
\* Excerpted from the 4/99 ABOto Policy Statement on Otolaryngic Allergy and Immunology.

## An **AAOA** Fellow's Education and Training

- \* 4 Year College
- \* Medical or Osteopathic School
- \* Residency in Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery
- \* Board Certification in Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery (Otolaryngic Allergy is part of the certifying exam given by the American Board of Otolaryngology)
- \* Post-Residency educational courses and demonstrated experience in the field of Otolaryngic Allergy
- \* Member of American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy
- \* Fellowship Certification—An Otolaryngic Allergist attains fellowship status in the American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy by passing an oral and written examination and is required to attend a number of post-graduate courses and seminars.

**For more information about current Allergy Practice, please ask your Doctor or contact:**

## THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OTOLARYNGIC ALLERGY



**11130 Sunrise Valley Road  
Suite 100  
Reston, Virginia 20191**

**202.955.5010 | phone  
202.955.5016 | fax  
aaoaf@aaoaf.org**

## The ENT ALLERGY SPECIALIST





## A few words about **ALLERGIES** of the **EAR, NOSE and THROAT**

**Y**ou're not alone if you suffer from allergies. In fact, millions of Americans have them. Allergies can appear at any age, and can even disappear in childhood only to reappear in adulthood.

Allergy is a condition, often inherited, in which the immune system of the affected person reacts to something eaten or in the environment that doesn't affect most other people. People often think of allergy as only "hayfever," with sneezing, runny nose, nasal stuffiness and itchy, watery eyes. However, allergies can also cause symptoms such as chronic "sinus" problems, postnasal drip, head congestion, frequent "colds," recurring ear infections, hearing loss, dizziness, chronic cough and asthma. Even stomach and intestinal problems, many skin rashes, chronic headaches and fatigue can be symptoms of allergy.

Your **Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) Allergist** is a specialist who can diagnose and treat allergies affecting the ear, nose and throat. The specialty of Ear, Nose, and Throat is also called **Otolaryngology**, and we sometimes refer to allergy problems in this area of the body as **Otolaryngic Allergy**.



## **ALLERGY TREATMENT**

Despite the advances in allergy care during the past several decades, there are still only three basic, accepted approaches to allergy care:

- 1 *Avoidance of the offending allergens (the things to which a person is allergic);*
- 2 *Pharmacotherapy (medications); and*
- 3 *Immunotherapy (allergy shots or desensitization).*

## **AVOIDANCE**

The first most basic treatment step, once an allergen has been identified, is to eliminate or avoid contact with it, if possible. Unfortunately, avoiding some allergens (such as dust, molds, and animals) is often difficult and thus allergen avoidance alone may not be effective.

## **PHARMACOTHERAPY**

Medications can frequently control allergy symptoms. These may include antihistamines, decongestants, prescription nasal sprays, leukotriene inhibitors and other types of products.

## **IMMUNOTHERAPY**

When allergen avoidance and medications do not successfully control allergy symptoms, the Otolaryngic Allergist can alter the body's overactive response by carefully challenging the patient's immune system through regular injections of the actual allergens to which a patient is sensitive. This treatment, very similar to the vaccination for infectious diseases such as the flu, can be given after allergy testing has revealed what it is that a patient is allergic to.

Over time it may be possible to actually alter a person's excessive response to these environmental allergens, and both improve symptoms, as well as decrease the need for medications and allergen avoidance for many years.

## **Why seek the care of an OTOLARYNGIC ALLERGIST?**

An **Otolaryngic Allergist** is able to diagnose and treat disorders of the upper respiratory tract (ear, nose, throat etc.) caused by allergic conditions. Because the **Otolaryngic Allergist** is an ear, nose, and throat surgeon and specialist, other non-allergic diseases of the upper respiratory tract can also be efficiently diagnosed and treated.

To diagnose and treat your allergies, the **Otolaryngic Allergist** uses methods that have been shown to not only identify specific allergens, but also to achieve effective control of allergies quickly.

## **When to see a SPECIALIST**

The following represent circumstances under which a patient should seek consultation with an **Otolaryngic Allergist**:

- \* When the diagnosis of an ear, nose, or throat allergy or cause of an ear, nose, or throat symptom is uncertain.
- \* When allergy or ear, nose or throat symptoms are not adequately controlled.
- \* When special diagnostic allergy tests are needed.
- \* When specialized treatment such as immunotherapy is needed.
- \* When other related ear, nose, and throat medical problems, such as chronic sinusitis, nasal polyps, fluid in the middle ear, chronic ear infections, deviated septum, vocal disturbances, or enlarged adenoids or tonsils may be present.
- \* When complications associated with treatment or difficulty in controlling allergy symptoms are affecting the patient's quality of life.