

## 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.**

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**



**1990 M Street NW  
Suite 680  
Washington, DC 20036**

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

*The*  
**ENT  
ALLERGY  
SPECIALIST**

