

# The Pollen

Inaugural Edition

## Allergic Rhinitis (AR) aka "Hay-Fever"

Everyone has heard these words associated with allergies, but what do they really mean? Rhinitis, literally means inflammation of the nasal mucosa. Alone, rhinitis can be caused by a multitude of factors, but when associated with allergens, other organ systems, i.e. eyes, ears, and throat, are usually involved.<sup>1</sup>

### The main symptoms associated with AR are:

- Sneezing
- Rhinorrhea (runny nose)
- Nasal irritation
- Nasal blockage (stuffy nose)

AR is further categorized by both persistence and severity. Persistent rhinitis is defined as having symptoms more than four (4) times a week or more than four (4) weeks a year. Intermittent rhinitis the opposite occurs less than four times a week or less than four weeks a year. There are two main classes of severity, mild or moderate-severe, and these are determined by their effect or impairment on daily activities, sleeping habits, or quality of life.<sup>1</sup>

### Did you know?

- Rhinitis affects 25% of Westernized populations.
- In a 2004 NHIS survey, 25.3 million Americans were reported to suffer from AR, 6.8 million of those being less than 18 years of age.<sup>2</sup>
- It is also strongly supported that having a maternal history of allergies will result in AR in a child by age 6.<sup>1</sup>
- It takes around two (2) years of allergen exposure to develop classical allergic symptoms.<sup>1</sup>
- 65-70% of patients with rhinitis are prescribed both antihistamines and nasal corticosteroid sprays for symptom relief.<sup>3</sup>

If left untreated AR can develop into other, potentially more serious, comorbidities such as:

- Sinusitis
- Nasal polyps
- Otitis Media
- Asthma

Because symptomatology is similar between Allergic Rhinitis vs Non-Allergic Rhinitis, **allergy testing is the only definitively way to diagnose** whether patients' rhinitis is caused by allergies. A review of patient medical history and a thorough exam in conjunction with allergy testing is the most comprehensive way to help your doctor diagnose AR.

1. Middleton's Allergy. Seventh Edition. 2009.  
2. National Health Interview Survey. [www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm)  
3. Larry Garner. 2/26/2013