

James Tarbox, M.D.

What are adult onset allergies?

0:06

While we see a lot of allergies in kids who grow up with, you know, runny nose, itchy eyes, some food allergies, you have some percent of the population really don't develop allergies until your 20s or 30s or even older.

What causes adult onset allergies?

0:22

Like a lot of things, it's with genetics with your environment, what you're exposed to. And for some people rather than having allergies, kind of an atopic march developed when they're younger, it takes toll later years in life.

What are some common allergens that could trigger adult onset allergies?

0:38

In the springtime, you have a lot of trees and grasses that are in the air. Sometimes we get, you know, the wind can kick up a lot of dirt. And dirt itself has a lot of debris in it, bacteria and viruses as well. And then looking at a different aspect you have food allergies as well, which some people tend to develop later as well.

What are typical symptoms of adult onset allergies?

1:03

Just kind of depends what kind of allergic profile you fit. So you can have runny nose, itchy eyes, congestion. If you have asthma, you can have wheezing, shortness of breath, people with food allergies, of course, you can have many different reactions, but rashes, shortness of breath, maybe nausea, vomiting, lightheadedness.

How can those allergy symptoms impact daily life?

1:31

Obviously, allergies can have a real big impact on life. If your nose is running. If you're coughing that can be a detriment. You can have trouble you know with exercise or shortness of breath with food allergies that can affect you know going out for meals. Allergies themselves are a huge burden.

Do you have any tips for adults adjusting to living with allergies for the first time?

1:58

So if you have nasal symptoms, you can use over the counter antihistamines nasal sprays, recommend saline rinses to people with people who are wheezing it can be good to, you know be placed on inhalers see a lung doctor see an allergist. Food allergies can be a little more

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difficult, it's good to kind of figure out what you're reacting to seeing an allergist as well for avoidance, seeing if, make sure you have an epinephrine pin. And there are now actually newer treatments for food allergy.

What happens if allergies are left untreated?

2:36

While you know nasal symptoms and cough, long term, those are more of an annoyance. If you have asthma like symptoms, you can have worsening lung function you could potentially end up in hospital. And same thing with food allergy. While a lot of adults might only have mild symptoms like rash or upset stomach, there's always the potential you can end up with a severe reaction and in the emergency department.

When do you recommend someone to see an allergist?

3:07

If you've already tried some over the counter medicines, you know, senior primary care physician, they've tried some initial therapies, and you still aren't getting the management you need or especially if you're having severe symptoms, I think that'd be a good time to see an allergist.

Are there any allergy medications that people should be cautious of?

3:25

Some of the medicines I talked to people about is need to be careful depending on what inhalers you're on because that can sometimes mix with heart medicines. There's a popular medicine called Montelukast or Singulair, which, which people who have mood swings or have, you know, a history of psychiatric symptoms you need to be careful with and then there's kind of older medicines as well like theophylline which you need to watch because it can have side effects as well.

Anything else to add?

4:04

I would just say that if you've noticed a change in symptoms, and especially if it's impacting your quality of life, make sure to go see your primary care physician or an allergist because just because you didn't have these symptoms growing up it doesn't mean you have to live with them now.