

## **What is allergic rhinitis?**

### **Definition:**

Allergic Rhinitis, also called "hay fever," is caused by an allergic response to outdoor or indoor allergens, such as pollen, dust mites or pet dander. Some people have symptoms year-round. For others, hay fever symptoms get worse at certain times of the year, usually in the spring, summer or fall.

Hay fever can make you miserable and affect your performance at work or school, and interfere with leisure activities. But you don't have to put up with annoying symptoms. Learning how to avoid triggers and finding the right treatment can make a big difference.

### **Symptoms:**

- Runny nose and nasal congestion
- Watery or itchy eyes
- Sneezing
- Cough
- Itchy nose, roof of mouth or throat
- Sinus pressure and facial pain
- Swollen, blue-colored skin under the eyes (allergic shiners)
- Decreased sense of smell or taste



### **Triggers/Causes:**

- Tree pollen, common in the spring
- Grass pollen, common in the late spring and summer
- Weed pollen, common in the fall
- Dust mites or cockroaches
- Dander (dried skin flakes and saliva) from pets such as cats, dogs or birds
- Spores from indoor and outdoor fungi and molds

### **Tests/Diagnosis:**

- Skin prick test, a 30 minute in office procedure
- Allergy blood test

### **Treatments:**

- Avoidance of triggers
- Medications
- Immunotherapy, or "allergy shots," which can considerably reduce allergy symptoms and need for medication

Call South Bay Allergy and Asthma or go on to our website at [southbayallergy.com](http://southbayallergy.com) to schedule an appointment.