

# Spotting symptoms in a Child

Advice provided by [allergyuk.org](http://allergyuk.org)



Different allergies produce a range of different symptoms and these can point to what type of allergy a child is suffering from. However, some allergies may produce similar symptoms, so when a child is suffering from more than one allergy, it can be difficult to know what each symptom is caused by.

The illustration below shows areas where allergy sufferers may experience symptoms. Allergic symptoms may appear in just one part of the body, such as runny nose and sneezing, or they may affect several areas, for instance, breathing difficulties and skin problems.



For more help,  
contact the **Allergy UK helpline:**

9am to 5pm,  
Monday to Friday

**01322 619 898**

## Key facts

➤ Allergy symptoms commonly affect breathing, digestion, eyes and skin

➤ itchy rashes can lead to skin infections; and chronic diarrhoea can lead to weight loss.

If you have any comments about this factsheet, contact the Allergy UK Helpline - 01322 619 898.

Last review date: 04/2015

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VERSION 3

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Many of these symptoms can develop as a result of other common childhood illnesses. However, with allergy, symptoms may appear suddenly, even dramatically; they can be persistent, and can appear without an obvious cause. If you have any concerns about your child's health and wellbeing, you should visit their GP.

Why these parts of the body? When an allergy is triggered, the body's immune system has an inappropriate reaction to what, for most people, is an entirely harmless substance. The cells which react are found in those areas of the body that come into contact with the outside environment, or external substances that are passing through the body; that is, the skin, lining of the throat, airways, eyes and digestive tract.

This is why these areas of the body are most affected by allergy and show most allergy symptoms. However, an allergic reaction that starts in these places can set off effects in other parts of the body, which is why allergy sufferers may experience more than one symptom for a single allergy.

## > The Impact of Symptoms

Allergy symptoms can be mild, moderate or severe, and while some people seem to experience the same level of allergy symptoms each time they have an allergic reaction, there is no guarantee that a mild reaction on one occasion won't lead to a more serious reaction on another occasion. This is why it is so important that allergy in children should be diagnosed, treated and controlled.

Although most allergies appear as an immediate reaction, in some cases allergies will cause delayed reactions. The most serious and alarming type of allergic response is called

anaphylaxis. This is a life-threatening emergency situation where a person's airways become blocked due to swelling, and their blood pressure can fall alarmingly as their body tries to deal with the substance causing the reaction. Only the immediate-type reaction can cause anaphylaxis.

Symptoms of allergy affect many children on a daily basis, but it is not always easy to recognise how much the symptoms affect a child's general health and well-being. For example, a child with eczema will have chronic itchy, sore skin, while an asthma sufferer may not be able to run around with their friends, and the coughing and wheezing can affect their sleep. Rhinitis sufferers can struggle to avoid the allergens they react to, while children with a food allergy may have to worry about anaphylaxis if they have a severe reaction.

Suffering from any of these symptoms can have a massive impact on a child's life. Some symptoms can be seen to lead to more severe conditions. For example, itchy rashes can lead to skin infections; and chronic diarrhoea can lead to weight loss. However, there are many more minor symptoms, such as constant runny or blocked noses that may affect the quality of a child's life because, for example, they then suffer from headaches, lack of sleep, and lack of concentration at school. Tiredness can lead to irritability and bad moods, and this can affect both the child and whole family.

However, once understood, the effects of allergy can be reduced, and treatments can bring relief to a child, making their childhood a much happier experience.

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## Key Points:

- Allergy symptoms may appear in just one part of the body, or can affect several areas
- Allergy symptoms can appear suddenly, can be persistent, and may have no obvious cause
- It is possible to have delayed allergic reactions
- Allergy symptoms commonly affect breathing, digestion, eyes and skin
- Symptoms can be mild, moderate or severe
- Only the immediate-type reaction can cause immediate severe, life-threatening reactions (anaphylaxis)
- Untreated symptoms of allergy can lead to more serious health problems
- Diagnosis and Treatment can bring allergy symptoms under control

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