**Overview of Allergic Rhinitis**

1. “Hay fever” is the casual term to describe “nasal allergies,” which is medically known as “allergic rhinitis.” Allergies are when your immune system kind of goes haywire and starts attacking something that doesn't need to be attacked. For nasal allergies, outdoor triggers can include things like tree, grass, or weed pollen. Indoors, common triggers include pets, dust mites, or mold. Some people may have allergies only during certain seasons, others may have trouble year-round.

(2)
Common symptoms of nasal allergies include runny nose, stuffy nose, sneezing, itching of the nose, itchy, red or watery eyes, ear itching or blockage, and sometimes what we call post nasal drip, which is that sensation of mucous dripping down your throat. You can have just one symptom, or multiple of these symptoms in combination. Some patients get symptoms only in short bursts when they are exposed to things they are allergic to. Other patients experience symptoms only during certain seasons of the year, such as the Spring or Fall. At the other end of the spectrum, some patients have symptoms all day long, every day.

(3)
Basically, we have three approaches to help people with nasal allergies. The first is the environmental approach where we identify the things that they're allergic to, and help them to avoid those things if possible, which can sometimes help to solve the problem. The second approach is allergy medicines. And the third approach is allergy shots. For most people, environmental avoidance alone won’t be enough, and they need to add on allergy medicines and in severe cases, allergy shots. Generally, allergic rhinitis is not treated with surgery, unless you have repeated sinus infections or a structural issue, in which case you may need to be referred to a surgeon.

(4)
Medicine options include, saline nasal rinses, which is actually just salt water and not a medicine, number 2, antihistamines in pill or liquid form, and number 3, nasal sprays. There are different types of medicines that can come in a nasal spray: most commonly a steroid medicine, but antihistamines also come in spray form as well.

People with mild allergies may find that an antihistamine works well. However, patients with more severe allergies will find that a nasal steroid spray provides excellent relief, especially if taken regularly, and these are quite safe to use. Most antihistamines and nasal steroid sprays are now available over the counter, and do not need a doctor’s prescription. Some common nasal steroid sprays include:
* Fluticasone
* Triamcinolone
* Flunisolide
* Budesonide

A common nasal anti-histamine spray is Azelastine.

Some common non-drowsy anti-allergy pills include:

* Loratadine
* Fexofenadine
* Cetirizine
* Levocetirizine

Some common drowsy anti-allergy pills include:

* Diphenhydramine
* Hydroxyzine
* Chlorpheniramine

(5) For more severe cases, allergy shots can be quite helpful, and usually are started if someone is either not tolerating medicines due to side effects, or the medications don’t help enough. The next video reviews allergy shots in more detail.