

## 57 - Allergies

Did you know you can develop an allergy at any time? But you can also stop being allergic to something overnight. But what are allergies and why does your body react adversely to certain things in foods and nature?

It turns out, most allergies are just a big misunderstanding. Your body's immune system is overreacting to something that's typically safe. That something is called an "allergen." With plants, that allergen is pollen. With pets, the allergen is skin cells called "dander," which can be found in the bodily fluids, or fur of cats and dogs. Food has its own allergens. With certain fruits, vegetables, nuts and spices, the substance that causes a food allergy is similar to the substance found in pollen!

Most allergic reactions, such as watery eyes, sneezing or coughing, are fairly minor. But some reactions, such as breathing problems, are more severe, and can be very dangerous. That's why you should tell a parent or doctor about any symptom, even minor ones... in case you are developing an allergic reaction.

### What You'll Learn

1. What are allergies? What is happening inside your body when you have an allergic reaction?
2. What are allergens and how is it a tree or your doggie can make you sneeze or cough?
3. Can you outgrow allergies? Can allergies be cured?

### Activities

1. Check out these great allergy activities from Brain Pop to help make kids more aware of their surroundings. Brainstorm with your child ways to keep allergies in check. For example, allergies to pollen can be controlled by closing windows & limiting time outdoors. Allergies to foods can be controlled by avoiding certain foods & alerting family members, teachers, and restaurant waitstaff to avoid serving potentially harmful foods. Have your child create a guide about allergies and ways to control them.
2. Check pollen counts in your area on the internet or in the newspaper (many weather reports include pollen counts). This can be a long-term activity so your child can see when the allergy season begins and ends. Your child can research plants in your area to find out which are active during allergy season.

3. Have your child ask family members and friends about their allergies. Your child can keep a list and track warning signs. For example, if a family member is allergic to peanuts, your child can create a warning sign that explains what symptoms can occur and how to treat them.

## Additional Resources

Sometimes, telling kids no because of an allergy can leave them feeling left out. Check out the [American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology](#) for games, puzzles, and recipes for allergy friendly activities.

## Kid News

Did you know that kids can be inventors? Samaira Mehta learned to love coding after her dad played a joke on her. She wanted to be able to create just like her dad. Samaira wanted her friends to join her but realized her friends didn't love coding as much as she did so she created board games to help make coding fun and easy to learn. You can read more about her story [here](#)! She also launched a website to help other kids launch their own businesses.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This activity guide is for the Who Smarted? podcast [www.WhoSmarted.com](http://www.WhoSmarted.com)