

# ALLERGIES AND SENIOR CARE

CAREGIVERS



Help Seniors Safely Manage Allergies

## How to Help Seniors With Allergies

Everything from the changing of the seasons to a crumb of food can cause a reaction for someone who has an allergy. For seniors, allergies can be especially dangerous.

Seasonal allergies alone affect 50 million people in the U.S. Seniors can be affected by these allergies, as well as food, pet, dust, and other types of allergies. As seniors face other challenges associated with aging, it's important to help them with allergy management.

[\(Hopkins Medicine\)](#)



## Common Allergies Among Seniors

Although allergies often develop in childhood, it's not uncommon for people in their 50s, 60s, or 70s to suddenly develop allergies. The most common causes of allergic reactions in seniors are the same as the most prevalent allergies in general.

### Common types of allergens include:



#### Seasonal:

- Pollen
- Weeds
- Certain plants



#### Environmental:

- Mold
- Dust
- Certain animals



#### Food:

- Peanuts
- Shellfish
- Ingredients in medications

If seniors display symptoms of allergies like a runny nose, upset stomach, headache, or rash after exposure to an allergen, it's important for them to consult a doctor.

[\(WebMD\)](#)

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## Tips for Managing Allergies

Whether seniors have been managing allergies for years or are learning to deal with onset allergies, it is important that they have help.

Some aspects of aging, like memory loss or reliance on medications, can affect seniors' abilities to handle their allergies. Environmental allergies, like an allergy to mold, can also be difficult for seniors to manage if they have trouble maintaining a clean home on their own.

### Help seniors by:

- Keeping a list of allergens available for all caregivers
- Including allergies on medical alert tags or other places emergency personnel might look
- Keeping allergens out of the home, including as meal ingredients for other family members
- Finding indoor activities for seniors with seasonal allergies during hard times of year
- Asking medical personnel if allergies and a senior's medications might conflict
- Finding allergen-free recipes
- Helping maintain a clean home
- Knowing what to do (and educating seniors about what to do) if an allergic reaction occurs

([Asthma and Allergies](#)) & ([Asthma and Allergies](#))



### Home Care Tip

Integrate allergy management into any tracking provided to seniors and their families. For instance, include allergy medication on daily meds trackers and add cleaning tasks specifically preventing dust and other allergens to task lists.

## How Allergies Affect Seniors

Part of aging is the degeneration of the immune system, organs, and other elements of the body. For seniors, that can mean allergens that once weren't a big deal now result in a constantly runny nose or another more intense symptom. Some medications can also exacerbate symptoms. Don't take senior allergies lightly. Ask doctors how to manage allergies best.

([Life Care Services](#))

## Symptoms of Allergies

Seniors should be checked for allergies if they have symptoms like:

- Itchy/runny nose
- Congestion or wheezing
- Dry or inflamed skin
- Rashes
- Watery eyes
- Headache
- Mucus and nasal discharge
- Persistent cough
- Swelling

([SeniorCaring](#))