

## **Facts about... ALLERGIC RHINITIS**

### **What Is Allergic Rhinitis?**

- Allergic rhinitis, or nasal allergies, is an inflammatory reaction of the nasal passages to allergens, such as dust mites, animal dander, mold spores, and pollens.
- Allergic rhinitis is one of the most prevalent and chronic diseases in the U.S., affecting up to 40 million people -- including 10 to 30 percent of adults and up to 40 percent of children.
- Within minutes of exposure to an allergen, immune response cells release chemicals, such as histamine and leukotrienes, that lead to inflammation and may produce symptoms including nasal congestion, sneezing and runny or itchy nose.

### **What are the Types of Allergic Rhinitis?**

- Seasonal allergic rhinitis (SAR), triggered by pollens, generally occurs during the spring and fall seasons and lasts a few weeks to a few months.
- Perennial allergic rhinitis (PAR), triggered by dust mites, animal dander, and mold, occurs year-round.

### **What is the Impact of Allergic Rhinitis?**

- The 2004 "The Burden of Illness of Rhinitis in America" survey looked at the level of nasal symptom control patients with severe allergic rhinitis were achieving. The survey showed that more than half of the respondents had their nasal symptoms, such as nasal congestion, sneezing, itchy and runny nose, only "somewhat controlled" over a four week period. Just over 12 percent said their symptoms were either "well controlled" or "completely controlled."
- In a survey conducted in 2004 approximately 14 million physician office visits in the U.S. were attributed to allergic rhinitis.
- Allergic rhinitis is a major contributor to the total cost of health-related work absenteeism and presenteeism (lost productivity while at work), causing a mean total productivity loss of almost \$600 per employee per year - higher than stress, migraine, depression, arthritis, respiratory infection, diabetes or heart disease.

## **How are Nasal Symptoms Treated?**

- Intranasal steroids (INSs) have been proven effective for the treatment of nasal congestion, sneezing, and runny or itchy nose in patients with both seasonal and year-round allergies.
- Unlike other types of treatments, INSs reduce the nasal inflammation that is a root cause of nasal allergies and works throughout the allergy process to block an entire range of the chemicals in the body that are involved in inflammation and that may lead to nasal allergy symptoms such as sneezing, nasal congestion, runny nose and itchy nose.
- In addition to intranasal steroids, treatment options may include antihistamines, decongestants, leukotriene antagonists and allergen immunotherapy.

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