



Allergy Facts and Figures

An allergy is when your immune system reacts to a foreign substance, called an allergen. It could be something you eat, inhale into your lungs, inject into your body or touch. This reaction could cause coughing, sneezing, hives, rashes, itchy eyes, a runny nose and a scratchy throat. In severe cases, it can cause low blood pressure, breathing trouble, asthma attacks and even death.

There is no cure for allergies. You can manage allergies with prevention and treatment. More Americans than ever say they manage allergies. It is among the country's most common, but overlooked, diseases.

How Common Are Allergies?

- More than 50 million Americans have experienced various types of allergies each year.¹
- Allergies are the 6th leading cause of chronic illness in the U.S.¹

How Many People Get Sick from Allergies?

- Allergic conditions are one of the most common health issues affecting children in the U.S.¹
- In 2018, 7.7 percent of adults and 7.2 percent of children were diagnosed with hay fever.²
- Each year in the U.S., it is estimated that anaphylaxis to food results in 30,000 emergency room visits.³

How Many People Die from Allergies?

- The most common triggers for anaphylaxis, a life-threatening reaction, are medicines, food and insect stings.⁴ Medicines cause the most allergy related deaths.⁵
- Black Americans and older adults have the highest rates of death due to allergic reactions to medicines, food or unknown allergens.⁵

What Are the Costs of Allergies?

- The annual cost of allergies exceeds \$18 billion.¹
- Food allergies cost about \$25 billion each year.⁶

What Are Indoor and Outdoor Allergies?

Types of indoor and outdoor allergies include sinus swelling, seasonal and returning allergies, hay fever and nasal allergies. Many people with allergies often have more than one type of allergy. The most common indoor/outdoor allergy triggers are: [tree, grass and weed pollen](#), [mold spores](#), [dust mites](#), [cockroaches](#), and [cat, dog](#) and rodent dander.

- [Allergic rhinitis](#), often called hay fever¹ affects 5.2 million of the children population and 19.2 million of the adult population.²
- In 2018, white children were more likely to have hay fever than Black children.²
- The same triggers for indoor/outdoor allergies also often cause [eye allergies](#).



How Common Are [Skin Allergies](#)?

Skin allergies include skin inflammation, eczema, hives, chronic hives and contact allergies. Plants like poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac are the most common skin allergy triggers. But skin contact with cockroaches and dust mites, certain foods or latex may also cause skin allergy symptoms.

- In 2018, 9.2 million children had skin allergies.²
- Children age 0-4 are most likely to have skin allergies.²
- In 2018, Black children in the U.S. were more likely to have skin allergies than white children.²

How Common Are [Food Allergies](#)?

Eight foods cause most food allergy reactions. They are milk, soy, eggs, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish.

- About 32 million people have food allergies in the U.S.^{7,8}
 - About 26 million (10.8%) U.S. adults have food allergies.⁷
 - About 5.6 million (7.6%) U.S. children have food allergies.⁸
- In 2018, 4.8 million (6.5%) children under 18 years of age had food allergies over the previous 12 months.²
- Milk is the most common allergen for children, followed by egg and peanut.⁹
- Shellfish is the most common allergen for adults, followed by peanut and tree nut.⁹

How Common Are [Drug Allergies](#)?

- Severe drug reactions may affect 10 percent of the world's population. These reactions affect up to 20 percent of all hospitalized patients.¹⁰
- Penicillin is the most common allergy trigger for those with drug allergies. Up to 10 percent of people report being allergic to this common antibiotic.¹¹

How Common Is [Latex Allergy](#)?

- About 4.3 percent of the general population has a latex allergy.¹²
- Latex allergy is more common in certain occupations. Approximately 9.7 percent of health care workers have a latex allergy.¹²

How Common Is [Insect Allergy](#)?

People who have insect allergies are often allergic to bee and wasp stings and poisonous ant bites. Cockroaches and dust mites may also cause nasal or skin allergy symptoms.

- Insect sting allergies affect 5 percent of the population.¹³
- At least 90-100 deaths occur each year in the United States due to insect sting anaphylaxis.¹⁴

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