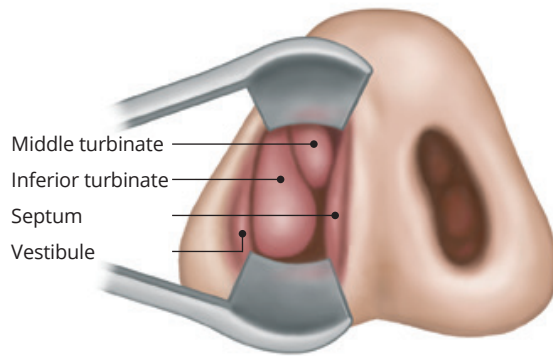


Allergic Rhinitis

Allergic rhinitis is a common disease in both adults and children and Hong Kong has one of the highest rates of allergic rhinitis, with up to 30% of the Hong Kong population affected.



Position of the Turbinates

Allergic rhinitis is a condition where a hypersensitivity of nasal mucosa, the lining of the nose, is caused by an allergic reaction to allergens in the environment.

Other tissues that can be affected are the skin and the lining of the lungs. The commonest allergens are certain proteins or glycoproteins, such as domestic dust mites, moulds, pollens and animal skin cells that can be found in offices, homes and outdoors.

Patients show symptoms such as nasal obstruction, sneezing, nasal irritation, an excessive discharge of nasal mucous, lessened sensitivity to odours, and itchy and watery eyes. On examination, the lining of the nose and the internal structures show changes in appearance. Polyps may also be present that can cause nasal blockage and decrease the sense of smell. Sufferers can opt for medical or surgical treatment to relieve such symptoms.

Great impact on sleep quality and productivity

Symptoms of allergic rhinitis can impact on work, schooling, sleep quality and leisure activities. It is estimated the economic impact and work productivity lost amounted to US\$2.4 and \$4.6 billion dollars annually in the US.

Some sufferers have a strong family history of conditions such as allergic rhinitis, eczema and asthma. If both parents have the conditions, their children are more likely to develop allergic rhinitis.

Allergic rhinitis can be seasonal, in patients who are sensitive to allergens, such as pollens, trees and grass. Those susceptible to animals, moulds and dust mites may have symptoms all year round.

Skin prick test or IgE measurement to determine allergens

Medical tests can help find out the root of the allergic problem. Allergic rhinitis, in general, can be investigated by either a skin prick test or measurement of the Immunoglobulin E (IgE) to specific allergens. IgE refers to a class of the body's antibody mainly present

in the skin and mucous membranes that can cause allergies when combined with allergens. Common substances such as domestic dust mites, moulds, pollens and animal epithelia (skin) are used to identify the allergens. When conducting a skin prick test, an allergen is placed on the inner side of the forearm, if the patient is allergic, a flare up reaction will show at the site within 20 minutes.

Treatment

Washing out the nose with a saline solution is found to be effective in removing the antigen and mucous in the nasal cavities, and decrease the symptoms of allergic rhinitis and sinusitis.

Medication, such as antihistamine, which selectively blocks histamine receptors, causes minimal or no drowsiness and can be taken as a tablet once a day.

Avoidance of the precipitating allergen (e.g. pollen) is helpful, but not always possible, however conditions can be lessened with a choice of several treatment options:

Topical steroid sprays and drops are now considered to be the cornerstone in the treatment of rhinitis. They are safe and effective, staying in the nose and not entering the blood circulation.

Patients who are sensitive to one or two allergens may be recommended a method of desensitisation which involves taking a small amount of the proven allergen in a purified form under the tongue, in the hope that antibodies will be produced.

When nasal obstruction is bothersome or unresponsive to medical treatment, surgery with the aid of a telescope to remove the turbinates (bony structures within the nose) and to straighten the nasal septum may be recommended. This endoscopic turbinate surgery has a very high success rate in relieving blocked nose due to enlarged turbinates.

Checked by:

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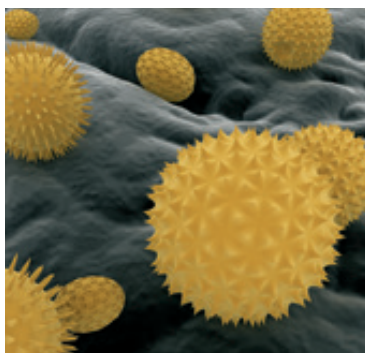
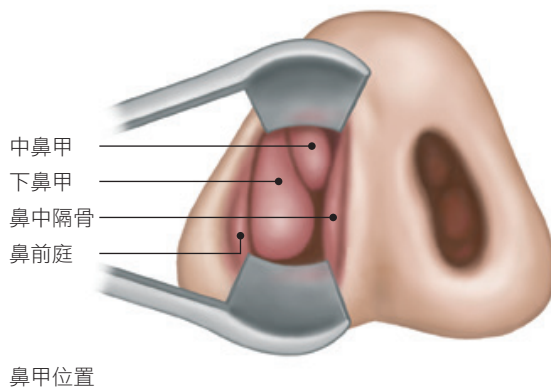
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鼻敏感

鼻敏感十分常見，成人和兒童均會患上，香港的患者比率更佔人口的三成。



花粉是其中一種最常見的致敏原

鼻敏感是指鼻黏膜對環境中的致敏原產生過敏的反應。身體其他容易有過敏反應的組織包括皮膚和肺黏膜。典型的致敏原可在家居、辦公室、甚至在戶外找到，如塵蟎、霉菌、花粉和動物皮屑等。

患者的病徵包括鼻道阻塞、打噴嚏、鼻粘液過多、嗅覺減退、眼部痕癢和流眼水。

鼻敏感患者的鼻黏膜及鼻腔結構也會出現變化，或會出現肉，阻塞鼻道和嗅覺減退，但患者可求醫，透過治療以舒緩病徵。

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對睡眠質素和工作效率構成影響

鼻敏感的病徵固然會影響日常工作、學習、睡眠質素和社交活動。據估計，鼻敏感單在美國，每年造成的經濟及和生產力損失便分別高達二十四億和四十六億美元。

鼻敏感很多時是遺傳得來的。若父母患有鼻敏感、濕疹或哮喘，子女罹患鼻敏感的機會將會增加。

另外，鼻敏感與季節有關。部分患者會對花粉、樹木和青草敏感，也有患者會常年對動物的皮屑、霉菌和塵蟎敏感。

皮膚及血液測試透視致敏原

皮膚點刺和IgE血液測試等醫學檢查有助患者找出致敏原的源頭。IgE是人體抗體的其中一種，主要在皮膚和鼻粘膜找到，若與致

敏原接觸，可以產生過敏反應。醫生會用一組常見的物質，如塵蟎、霉菌、花粉和動物皮屑來測試，以確定患者對什麼物質過敏。

患者接受皮膚點刺測試時，醫生會把致敏原放在前臂內的位置進行測試。若患者對某種物質過敏，測試位置會於二十分鐘內出現紅腫。

治療方法

鼻沖洗劑能有效沖洗鼻腔內的致敏原和鼻粘液，能減輕鼻敏感和鼻竇炎的症狀。

口服藥物如組織胺被認為是過敏的致病物質，故此抗組織胺藥物舒緩病徵，但又不會令人昏昏欲睡，每天只需要服用一次便可。

要預防鼻敏感，患者可在日常生活中嘗試避免接觸致敏原，例如花粉，雖然未必可以完全避免，但這有助患者減輕病情。患者亦可考慮以下多種治療：

局部類固醇鼻噴劑是現時治療鼻敏感的主要藥物，既安全又有效，不會被身體吸收或進入血液循環系統。

若患者對一至兩種致敏原產生過敏的反應，則可以嘗試脫敏治療，方法是把少量致敏原放在舌底，令身體產生相關的IgG抗體。

然而，若患者鼻道阻塞或對藥物治療的反應未如理想，醫生或會建議動手術，切除鼻甲部分(鼻甲指鼻腔外壁的三塊突出物)和修正鼻中隔骨。醫生透過手術用的顯微鏡完全切除肥厚了的鼻甲，這種微創手術對於舒緩因鼻甲肥大而造成的鼻道阻塞的成功率乃十分高。

核對：

明德國際醫院耳鼻喉科何志謙醫生

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