

What Happens If You Don't Treat Allergies (Leaving Allergies Untreated)

Allergies can be discouraging because the symptoms they cause make us uncomfortable. Most of us deal with seasonal allergies with only minor problems, but what happens if you don't treat allergies? Can they get worse?

Leaving allergies untreated might be a risk to your health. In this article we'll look at ways to respond to allergies and discuss their pros and cons. We'll also discuss some other treatments that are relatively simple to implement around your house. I know, because I've gone through the process!

My Experience with Untreated Allergies

I've had allergies ever since I was young, however my allergies weren't treated until later in adulthood. As a child my symptoms were numerous but I thought they were natural. My untreated symptoms included:

- *Fatigue (I thought it was because I was growing and active)*
- *Stuffy nose (doesn't everyone have a stuffed up nose)*
- *Eczema on my body and face (many kids have eczema)*
- *Ear wax build up*

I went to doctors about the eczema and asked about allergies. Doctors gave me cream and told me not to worry about it.

The fatigue I felt became worse and worse, but I still overlooked it because I played sports and trained hard. I had never had a “clear nose” so I wasn’t sure how my nose was supposed to feel.

As I became an adult I was more observant of others around me. Why did everyone have so much energy and why did most people not have a persistent stuffy nose.

I had enough observational evidence that something was affecting my immune system so I visited a doctor and a dermatologist. Both of them gave me cortisone cream for my eczema and didn’t refer me to an allergist (can you believe it!).

I wasn’t until years later when I was feeling really bad did I make an appointment on my own to visit an allergist. I was tested and treated and felt the difference pretty quickly.

As someone who’s now in their 30s, I’m convinced that if my symptoms were caught during my childhood my allergies would be much less severe.

Due to not addressing my allergies as a kid, I felt my symptoms grow to a point where I could hardly get through a day. In graduate school I was sleeping 12 hours a day and still woke up exhausted.

How I Discovered My Allergies and Started Treatment

In this section I’ll walk you through the process I went through to help relieve my allergies. My journey with allergies began with doing nothing, then avoidance, medication, and allergy shots.

By no means do I suggest using this order to relieve your allergies. I had serious allergies and I wish I considered allergy shots right away. As with any disease, avoidance is a wise decision to minimize daily exposure to allergens and take steps to make sure your home is clean!

Option 1: Do Nothing

The first and most obvious thing you can do for allergies is “nothing”. In fact, I took this approach, unknowingly, for almost 20 years. I had telltale signs of allergy and didn’t realize it so I suffered the consequences.

In hindsight I learned that when you are younger, your body can overcome allergies quite easily. I had the symptoms however I was still active and did well in school.

As I became older my skin was less supple, which made my susceptibility to allergic eczema worse, and my body wasn’t in as good of shape so my allergies had a greater effect.

An argument for doing nothing in childhood is that the immune system is still developing. Many children experience some form of allergy and as they develop their allergies go away.

If you have a child with allergies, monitor the symptoms closely. Their allergies might improve, however, if they take a turn for the worst look into medication and/or allergy shots.

Pros of doing nothing

- *Allergies might not affect your life*
- *Children may grow out of allergies*
- *Less expensive (no medication or doctors visits)*
- *Easier*

Cons of doing nothing

- *Doesn’t usually solve the problem*
- *Allergies may gradually worsen*
- *Allergies might impact the quality of life*

- *You'll never know or understand the problem*

Option 2: Avoidance

Allergy avoidance is one of the best things you can do to protect yourself from allergens. The main obstacles with avoidance is:

1) Knowing what you are allergic to

If you avoid dust mites with [pillow and mattress covers](#) but aren't allergic to them your allergies won't improve. If you keep your windows closed to avoid pollen it will be useful if pollen is your main allergy. This is why it's important to be allergy tested and know what you're reacting to.

2) It's almost impossible to avoid allergens

If you go outside chances are you'll run into some form of allergen (especially pollens and mold). If you're allergic to dust mites it's difficult to get rid of them entirely from your home. Same is true for the office and exercise.

Pros

- *If you know what you're allergic to you can take steps for avoidance*
- *Relatively easy to make small adjustments*
- *Little cost for avoidance*

Cons

- *Can never 100% avoid allergens*
- *You'll still experience some allergy symptoms*
- *If you don't know what you're allergic to avoidance is very difficult*
- *Doesn't cure the allergy*

Option 3: Antihistamines and Corticosteroids

If you have allergies you likely know there's lots of medicine. Whether it's eye drops for dryness, nasal spray for congestion, or an inhaler for asthma, there are plenty of options to temporarily soothe your symptoms. Notice I said "temporary".

Antihistamines and corticosteroids are extremely effective at reducing allergy symptoms but they aren't effective at getting rid of the underlying problem. There are certain instances when antihistamines work great. 1) short-term relief (seasonal) 2) minor allergy symptoms, 3) traveling.

Antihistamines aren't as great for people with year-round allergies (that's a lot of pills). Corticosteroids aren't great for long-term use because they can cause unwanted side effects.

There are also expensive so make sure you chose a medicine that helps you best. If you're curious about the [best over the counter allergy medication check](#) out our other article.

Pros of medicine

- *Effective at reducing allergy*
- *Great for short term use*
- *Plenty of options (eye, nose, mouth, pills)*

Cons of medicine

- *Expensive*
- *Not ideal for long term use*
- *Won't heal the allergy*
- *Might need to larger doses of medicine over time*

Option 4: Allergy Shots (Immunotherapy)

Allergy shots or immunotherapy are another options and my personal favorite. Allergy shots are administered by your allergist and contain the allergens you are reacting to.

The shot will be a custom mix. For example, it might contain the grasses, molds, and animals that you react to. Unfortunately, allergy shots aren't yet used for food allergies.

Allergy shots are the closest thing to a cure for allergies and require a long time commitment to improve. I've been on allergy shots for several years with amazing results and I don't take much medicine.

At first the shots will be weekly but as time progresses shots are given less frequently (once per month). Most people experience much fewer allergy symptoms and sometimes are totally healed. Read more about [my experience with allergy shots](#).

Pros of allergy shots

- *Closest thing to a cure*
- *Lower cost than medicine (over time)*
- *Natural process using allergens themselves*
- *If used in childhood can reduce the chance of developing more allergies.*
- *Great when avoidance is impossible*

Cons of allergy shots

- *Greater upfront cost (insurance will pay)*
- *Time commitment (takes time)*
- *Everyone reacts differently*
- *Some people don't like shots (but these are tiny needles)*

Simple DIY Allergy Treatment (What Happens If You Don't Treat Allergies)

If you or your child has allergies but you can't wait until going to an allergist, there are a few things you can do around the house to keep allergy symptoms at bay. I've written so many articles on allergies and these are my favorite products for reducing allergies.

1) Dust Mite Proof Mattress Cover

[Mattress and pillow covers](#) will help tremendously with dust mite allergy but you may not know that they can also help with pet and pollen allergy. The fabric that makes up a mattress naturally catches and holds onto all kinds of allergens.

Even though pollen isn't in the house it can accumulate on mattresses and cause allergy symptoms. Indoor pets tend to spend a lot of time on mattresses and pillows which can impact your quality of sleep.

The worst source of mattress and pillow allergies are from dust mites that live inside your pillows and mattresses. They live off human warmth, sweat, and eat dead skin flakes on our mattresses.

Invest in dust mite proof bed covers and you'll get allergy relief. Better yet, mattress and pillow covers are more hygienic and will keep your furniture looking new (resale value!).

2) HEPA Air Purifier for Allergies

Air purifiers were popular in the early 2000s but they were more like fans. These days you can find allergy quality purifiers that are marked with the acronym "HEPA". HEPA stands for high-efficiency particulate arrestance.

[HEPA air purifiers](#) capture microscopic allergens from the air (things we can't even see). HEPA air purifiers are perfect for a bedroom, office, or entire house depending on the size.

They are so effective that they can filter all the air in a house multiple times throughout the day. The best air purifiers for allergies have solid warranties and are made to run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

3) HVAC Filters for Allergies

HVAC filters are an often overlooked way to reduce allergies. A visit to your local home improvement store and you'll find a small selection of filters and sizes. Yes, there will likely be one or two that say "allergy quality" but trust me, those are not the best for allergies.

It takes a little more research to find the best HVAC filters for allergies. 3M and Nordic Pure are my favorite but you can only find their high quality filters on the Internet. We did a review of the [best HVAC filters for allergies](#).

Quality HVAC filters will remove dust, pollen, pet dander, as well as smoke and bacteria. You'll pay a little extra for these filters but the result is more than worth it. Fresh air is priceless right?

I usually turn the vent on once per day to help clean the air in the house. It's interesting to compare the best HVAC filters to the cheapest options – there's no comparison.

Conclusion

What happens if you don't treat allergies? It's hard to say but one thing is for sure: you won't improve and you won't know what's causing the problem.

Leaving allergies untreated can potentially increase the chance of developing new allergies. In my experience, I only had a few allergies when I was young but now have many! More allergies have limited my activities inside and outside the home and have made life tough. I really wish I caught what was bothering me when I was young.

If you have allergies there are a few different options you can choose:

1) Don't treat your allergies

Depending on the severity of your allergies this might be a big deal or none at all. Some people can get by life without looking into their allergy symptoms.

2) Avoid your allergies

Avoidance is actually much more effective than it sounds. Of course you won't be able to avoid 100% of your allergens but simple lifestyle changes can help. Exercising during low pollen days, or using HEPA air purifiers can help a lot to reduce problematic symptoms. Avoidance should be part of everyone's strategy who have allergies

3) Medication for allergies

Americans love to medicate and there is plenty of it to help soothe our allergies. The allergy business is huge for the pharmaceutical industry.

There are nasal sprays, eye drops, and creams you can apply to skin. As a general rule be careful with medications and consult your physician. Medication works great for allergy symptoms but hopefully you won't be using them year-round.

4) Allergy shots for treatment

Allergy shots are a natural way to heal your allergy symptoms. Allergists first test you to identify your allergies then create custom mixed shots for immunotherapy. Over time the shots help your body realize the allergens are harmless and your body should display fewer reactions.

I've had allergy shots for several years and I've benefited greatly. It takes patience and commitment but less allergies mean less medication and a better quality of life.

If you're looking for other ways to reduce allergy exposure in the home, consider mattress and pillow covers (we spend 1/3 our lives in bed so it should be clean). Also think about investing in a HEPA air purifier to clean our indoor air.

An additional step for clean indoor air is a HVAC filter for allergies. High-grade filters will capture pollen, dust, pet dander, mold spores, bacteria, and smoke. Using HVAC filters for allergies is like having a whole house air purifier. I run my vent everyday to circulate air and capture allergens.

We hope this articles helps with your health. Allergies severely affected my life and I wasn't sure what to do. More than anything, I recommend going to a reputable allergist to be tested.