# Week 1

**Subject: Should you be alarmed about allergies?**

When someone sneezes, do you automatically say something that translates to: “blessings,” “good health,” or “long life”? Those good wishes are appropriate for allergy sufferers.

If you suffer from allergies, you have a chronic condition. Allergies can affect your quality of life. They can send you to the hospital. They can even be life threatening.

Here are other reasons that it’s important to understand the seriousness of allergies:[[1]](#footnote-1)

* Researchers haven’t figured out why the body develops an immune response to substances that aren’t harmful.
* There is no cure for allergies: there are only ways to try to avoid triggers or manage reactions
* There is no way to prevent allergies: you can eat a balanced diet, exercise regularly and get a good night’s sleep and still suffer from allergies
* Allergies don’t care how old you are: they can afflict anyone at any age
* If you don’t currently suffer from any allergies, you may develop allergies in the future to one or more substances
* Allergies can lessen in severity or get worse over time

There are almost too many types of allergies to list, including reactions to chemicals, medications, latex, dust and mold, insect bites, trees and grass, cats and dogs, and many more things.

In this educational campaign, we’re going to focus on food allergies and respiratory or inhaled allergies. Through this campaign, called *Why allergies are more than irritating*, we hope to help you and your co-workers learn more about how to stay healthy, even living with allergies.

Look for upcoming emails, articles, and flyers with information about allergies. If you’re currently struggling with allergies, please talk to your healthcare provider. If you’re concerned about respiratory or food allergy issues in the workplace, please consider talk to [add contact information].

# Week 2

## Subject: When you take a bite and it bites you back

We have to eat to live. But for some mysterious reason, the body’s immune system can see certain types of food as a threat. The immune system immediately goes on the attack just like it would if it was fighting off a virus, bacteria, or toxin. This response is called an allergic reaction.

The symptoms will range from breathing distress to hives. The severity of the reaction can vary widely. In fact, it’s very important to be aware that your reaction (both symptoms and severity) can change from one exposure to that food allergen to another. It’s better to stay away from foods that you’re “mildly” allergic to: a future reaction could be much worse.

At worst, you may have a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction (which is a severe form of an allergic reaction) According to Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE), in the U.S., a food allergy reaction sends someone to the emergency room about every three minutes.[[2]](#footnote-2)

* Here are some of the foods that most commonly associated with allergic reactions in different parts of the world:1Milk
* Fish and shellfish
* Peanuts
* Tree nuts
* Grasses
* Soy
* Wheat
* Eggs

If you eat one of these foods and have trouble breathing almost immediately afterward—or develop hives, swelling around the mouth, diarrhea, or vomiting—see your healthcare provider. If the symptoms are severe, go to an emergency facility.

The best way to deal with a food allergy is to avoid these foods once you and your healthcare provider have identified them. If you have a severe allergic reaction (called anaphylactic) to a food, find out what medication or tool may be available in case of an emergency.

# Week 3

## Subject: A little sneezing or respiratory distress

Sniffling, sneezing, running or stuffy nose, post-nasal drip, watery eyes, itchy throat, and coughing.

Do you have a cold or are you allergic to something? Will you feel better in a few minutes or a few weeks or a couple of months? Do your symptoms get better when you move indoors? Do you have the same symptoms at the same time of year?

People can be allergic to many things, but one of the most common allergies is called allergic rhinitis, also known as nasal allergies.[[3]](#footnote-3) You may be allergic to something in the air—like pollen (which is just a fertilizing particle carried on air currents from plant to plant). Pollens are produced in the spring, summer, and fall, which is why it’s called a seasonal allergy.

Researchers don’t know why something innocuous like pollen bothers one person and not another. Your immune system releases histamines to boost blood flow in the areas where the allergens are detected. If your body decides, for some unknown reason, that pollen is attacking you, it will direct the membrane of the nose to make more mucus, causing a running or stuffy nose, coughing and sneezing.

It sounds like the symptoms of a cold, but the cold will run its course. Allergies, unfortunately, will hang around as long as you’re exposed to your allergic trigger.

You can try to minimize your exposure to allergic rhinitis by paying attention to the pollen count. Avoid outdoor activities when the pollen count is high. If you have a regular walking routine with co-workers, suggest an indoor walking venue instead.

See your healthcare provider to try to pinpoint what you’re allergic to. Your provider may also prescribe medication that can help suppress or manage allergy symptoms, such as antihistamines and nasal decongestants.

1. https://www.foodallergy.org/life-food-allergies/food-allergy-101/facts-and-statistics [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Food Allery Research & Education, “Food Allergy Facts & Statistics,” February 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. World Allergy Organization, “Food Allergy—A Rising Global Health Problem,” April, 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)