

Glossary of Allergic Terms & Diseases

A (an-)	A prefix that usually means one of the following: no, absence of, without, lack of or not.
Acarid	A tic or mite
ACE Inhibitor	A drug that blocks the angiotensin-converting enzyme. This drug is used to treat hypertension
Additive	A substance or chemical added to a food for preservation and/or flavor. Additives may cause an allergic reaction
Adjuvant	An agent typically added to vaccines to boost the immune response
Adrenaline	An internally produced hormone that stimulates the body's rapid defense system against trauma. This substance is used as a drug for treatment of anaphylaxis
Aeroallergen	A foreign substance in the air that leads to an allergy by triggering an immune reaction
Airway Obstruction	The blockage of airflow to the lung
Allergen	A substance, typically a protein, that elicits an IgE response associated with clinical symptoms
Allergenic	The property of a molecule that elicits an allergic reaction
Allergic Asthma	A variant of asthma associated with allergic diseases typically triggered by aeroallergen exposure
Allergic Contact Dermatitis	A skin rash elicited by allergens typically involving a delayed hypersensitivity reaction such as poison ivy
Allergic March	The spread of allergic symptoms and constellations in a patient with age
Allergic Reaction	An adverse immunological reaction associated with allergic responses
Allergic Rhinitis (seasonal and perennial)	Nasal congestion triggered by allergens. May be seasonal or perennial (present throughout the year)
Allergic Shiners	Darkening of the skin around the eyes that occurs in an allergy sufferer
Allergies	The constellation of clinical problems typically associated with allergic conjunctivitis, allergic rhinitis, asthma and eczema
Allergy	A reaction of the immune system that is triggered by allergens, associated with IgE and is typically harmless to most people
Allergy Clinic	A clinic that is dedicated to the care of allergy sufferers
Alternative Medicine (complementary, fringe)	Therapeutic approaches to the treatment of medical diseases that is different from standard medical practice
Anaphylactoid Reaction	A reaction similar to anaphylaxis but that is not IgE mediated
Anaphylaxis	An acute IgE-mediated allergic response that can be life-threatening
Anergy	The absence of an immune response to a particular substance
Angioedema	Deep tissue swelling of the skin
Animal dander	The scales, hair and skin of animals, which typically contain proteins that elicit strong allergic responses in patients allergic to pets
Anosmia	Loss of smell
Anti-allergy Medication	Medication that treats allergic disease
Antibiotics	Medication that treats bacterial infections
Antibody(ies)	A protein produced by the body's immune system that helps neutralize germs by recognizing and binding a specific antigen
Antigen	A substance, typically a protein, that elicits an immune response (such as an antibody)
Antihistamines	Drugs that block histamine (such as Benadryl)
Anti-inflammatory	Substance that blocks inflammatory reactions
Anti-inflammatory Medication	Medicines that inhibit inflammation
Aspergillus	A common fungus that often elicits allergies through airborne exposure
Asthma	Reversible airway obstruction associated with allergy, typically triggered by aeroallergen exposure

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Atopic Dermatitis	Also known as eczema. Dry, itchy skin rash associated with allergies.
Atopy	The predisposition to develop the constellation of allergic diseases including eczema, rhinitis, asthma, and conjunctivitis in individuals with a family history of these problems. This inherited tendency to develop certain allergic hypersensitivity reactions is associated with elevation of IgE
Atrophy	Decrease in size of a particular tissue
Autoimmune disease	A disease characterized by the immune system attacking the host (self)
B cell	A cell in the immune system that produces antibodies
Basophil	A circulating white blood cell that bears IgE receptors, releases histamine and is involve in allergic reactions
BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guerin)	A strain of tubular bacillus (bacteria) that does not cause tuberculosis but can elicit an anti-mycobacterial immunological response helpful for vaccination against tuberculosis
Benign	A non-aggressive form of a disease
Beta-agonist	A drug that activates the beta adrenergic receptor. This drug is used to increase airflow in asthma sufferers
Beta-blockers	Drugs that block the beta adrenergic receptor. These drugs are typically used for hypertension
Board Certification	Obtained by a doctor to practice a medical speciality such as Allergy
Bronchial Tubes	The airway tubes present along the bronchial small airway in the lung
Bronchiole	A small airway that connects large airways to the lung periphery
Bronchitis	Inflammation of the airways (bronchus)
Bronchodilator	A drug that increases the size of the bronchial airways
Bronchodilator Medication	A medication that increases the size of an airway
Bronchospasm	An acute constriction or narrowing of the airway
Budesonide	A corticosteroid drug
Casein	A protein in milk that can trigger milk allergy
Causal Agent	An agent that causes a particular response
Cell-mediated	Caused by the cellular components of the immune system that mediate an immunological response
Cell-mediated Immunity	The component of immunity that is elicited by cells
Challenge Test	Test that consists of challenging a patient with a presumed allergy
Chemosis	Swelling of the conjunctiva
Chemotaxis	Movement of cells, such as white blood cells, in response to a chemical stimulus
Chinese Herbal Treatment	Chinese herbal agents used for the treatment of allergic disease; an alternative therapy
Cilia	Microscopic hairs that move particles outside of the airways
Celiac Disease	An autoimmune intestinal inflammatory response triggered by gluten exposure
Commensal	Describes an organism that lives in association with a different species but does not harm it
Complement	Immune proteins in the blood that mark foreign substances so that they are recognized by the immune system
Conjunctivitis	Swelling of the conjunctiva
Contact Dermatitis	Swelling of the skin caused by contact with a substance such as poison ivy
Corticosteroid	An endogenous hormone that regulates metabolism and immunity
Corticosteroid Drugs	A drug of the corticosteroid classification that is typically used for its anti-inflammatory action
Cromolym Sodium	A drug that blocks mast cells and is used to treat allergies
Cross-reactivity	Reaction of an antibody against a different substance than the one it was originally directed against
CT (Computerized	Imaging technique that takes pictures of serial slices of a particular

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Tomography)	organ or segment of the body
Cytokines	Molecules produced in the body that regulate an immune response
Cytotoxic Cells	White blood cells that perform their function by killing other cells, typically organisms and tumors
Dander	Tiny particles of the skin, scales or hair that are shed by animals such as cats or dogs and are a major cause of allergies
DBPC (Double-blind Placebo-controlled) Study	This is a research study in which both the patient and the healthcare provider are unaware of whether the subject is being given the active drug or a placebo (sugar pill) in order to avoid bias in interpretation of the results
Decongestants	Medication used for opening the airways of the upper respiratory tract
Delayed-type Hypersensitivity	Immunological reaction that is delayed after antigen exposure. The reaction typically takes place within 48 to 72 hours after exposure, such as the reaction to poison ivy
Dennie Line	Skin folding underneath the eyes, typically associated with allergic conjunctivitis and rhinitis
Dermatitis	Swelling and inflammation of the skin. Often as a rash
Dermatographism	A red raised wheal that develops in the skin following firm pressure
Dermatophagoides pteronyssius	Insect that typically resides in dust and accounts for the major allergen present in dust
Dermatophyte	Fungus that can feed on the skin and cause ringworm
Dermatoses	Any disease of the skin
Desensitization	Loss of immunological sensitization
Diptera	A species of insects that possess a single pair of wings
DPT	Vaccination that is a combination of Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus.
Drug Allergies	An allergic reaction to a drug
Dust Mites	Microscopic organisms that live in dust and are a common cause of dust allergy
Dyspnoea	Shortness of breath
Ecchymosis	A bruise
Eczema	A group of skin disorders characterized by itching and a dry, red, flaky rash
Elimination Diet	The avoidance of a particular food by removing it from the diet
ELISA	An assay in the test tube that measures the amount of substance present
Emollients	Special moisturizing ointments, typically used to treat eczema
Endotoxin	A substance that is contained in gram-negative bacteria, is recognized by the immune system and typically triggers a toxic response
E-numbers	A method of labelling food additives in the European Union
Eosinophil(s)	A white blood cell that contains granules that absorb the eosin stain
Eosinophilic Esophagitis	Inflammation of the esophagus associated with eosinophil accumulation
Epinephrine	Also known as adrenaline
EpiPen	The drug consisting of Injector syringe, that looks like a pen, and injects epinephrine
Eu —	Prefix that typically means usual, well or normal
Excoriation	A scraping on the skin
Eye Allergies	Allergic Conjunctivitis
Feingold Diet	A food elimination diet to treat hyperactivity and salicylate sensitivity
FEV1: Forced Expiratory Volume	A lung function measure consisting of the amount of air volume forced out in one second
Fluticasone	A glucocorticoid drug, typically used topically
Food Additive	A substance added to food for preservation or taste
Food Allergies	Allergic reaction to a food substance

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Food Aversion	Fear of a food, particularly when there is a concern of allergies
Food Challenge	Exposure to a food with the aim of determining whether it will elicit an immunological or clinical response
Food Challenge Test	A test done to determine the effect of food exposure in an individual
Food Intolerance or Food Sensitivity	An adverse reaction to a food triggered by the immune system
Food Toxicity	An adverse reaction to a food, typically elicited by toxic chemicals in the food
Functional Disease	A disease that is typically not caused by organic etiology but is secondary to adverse mental functioning
FVC: Forced Vital Capacity	The amount of air that can be forced into the lung during a pulmonary function test
Gastroesophageal Reflux (GER)	Retrograde flow of acidic gastric contents into the esophagus
Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)	Pathological retrograde flow of gastric fluid into the esophagus, typically producing the symptom of heart burn
Generic	A drug that is not produced by the original manufacturer after the initial drug's patent has expired
Gluten Sensitivity	Immunological reaction to the wheat protein in gluten that causes and is associated with celiac disease
Haemoptysis	Coughing of blood from the lung
Halitosis	Bad breath
Hay Fever	Seasonal allergic rhinitis caused by exposure to pollen
Helicobacter	A gram negative bacteria that typically is found in the stomach and is a causal agent of certain types of gastritis
HEPA Filters: High Efficiency Particulate Air Filters	Filters capable of removing particles >3 microns with an efficiency greater than 99.97%
Heparin	A carbohydrate produced in the body that has anti-coagulating activity
Histaminase	A substance produced in the body that degrades histamine
Histamine	A substance produced by allergic inflammatory cells (mast cells and basophils) that triggers acute allergic symptoms
Histamine-blocking Agents	Agents that block histamines by inhibiting the histamine receptor
Histidine	Amino acid which is a precursor of histamine
Hives	A raised and red skin reaction caused by a local or systemic exposure to a substance that is typically triggered by local mast cell activation
Homeopathy	Field of medicine that is based on the theory that "like cures like" and is typically associated with treatment with a small quantity of drugs
House Dust Mite	An insect that lives in dust, typically thrives on human skin flakes and is a potent and common allergen
Humoral Immunity	A component of the immune system associated with soluble circulating proteins such as antibodies
Hypersensitivity	An exaggerated immunological reaction to a substance
Hyperventilation	Increased rate of breathing
Hypo-allergenic	A substance with decreased allergenicity
Ichthyosis	A group of skin disorders characterized by scaling of the skin
Idiopathic	Having no known cause
Idiosyncrasy	Unusual or unexplained sensitivity to a particular drug or food
IgA	An antibody found in mucosal fluids that typically protects the body from substances
IgE	Antibody of the E class that is involved in the the development of allergies by triggering mast cells and basophils
IgG	The most common form of protective antibody
Ileum	Last segment of the small intestines
Immediate	Acute rapid immunological immediate response to a substance,

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Hypersensitivity: Allergy	typically triggered by mast cell activation
Immune	A protective state of the host due to memory of prior exposure
Immune Complex	The complex formed between an antibody and the substance it recognizes
Immune Response	A response of the immune system to an antigen
Immune System	A protective arm of the host designed to recognize and eliminate harmful and/or foreign substances and cellular components
Immunization	Protective immunity by artificial means such as vaccinations
Immunoglobulin	Protein in the body that is generated against foreign substances and is capable of binding and typically neutralizing the substance
Immunoglobulin E (IgE)	The type of Immunoglobulin capable of eliciting acute activation of mast cells and basophils upon allergen exposure
Immunosuppression	A depression of the immune system
Immunotherapy	Manipulation of the immune system to harness a beneficial effect
Immunotherapy ("allergy shots or vaccinations")	Desensitizing an individual to a particular allergen. Also know as allergy shots
Impetigo	Skin infection typically caused by the Staphylococcus aureus
Incidence Rate	Number of new cases of a disease/disorder in a population per year
Incubation Period (Latent Period)	The amount of time it takes from initial exposure until the infection elicits the first clinical symptoms
Indoor Allergies	Allergies that are typically caused by allergens that reside inside
Inflammation	Swelling of a particular tissue typically caused by the body's immune response to injury
Inhalant Allergen	Substance that is inhaled and that elicits an allergic reaction
Inhaler	A medication that is inhaled or breathed in, primarily used to deliver drugs to the lungs
Insect Allergies	An allergy to a particular insect such as bee venom
Insulin	A hormone in the body that regulates glucose metabolism
Interleukin	A hormone in the body that regulates the communication between leukocytes
Intervention Study	A study that involves a comparison between two different agents such as a drug and a placebo
Intradermal Test	The application of an allergen into the lower layers of the skin. This test is used to assess immunity to proteins
Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)	A condition which is characterized by recurring abdominal pain, constipation and/or diarrhea with no identifiable pathological cause
Keratosis Pilaris	A dry skin rash located in the arms that is typically found in allergy sufferers
Late Phase	Delayed reaction to an allergen, typically occurring 6 to 8 hours after initial contact
Latent Allergy	Positive IgE against a particular allergen when clinical symptoms have yet to develop
Latex	Rubber derivative commonly found in certain medical products such as surgical gloves and catheters that may cause allergic reactions during procedures
Latex Allergies	Allergic reaction to latex
Leukocytes	White blood cells
Leukotriene Antagonists	Substances that antagonize leukotrienes
Leukotriene Modifiers	Substances that modify the generation or amount of leukotrienes
Leukotrienes	A lipid mediator of the immune system and a potent pro-inflammatory agent
Lichenification	Thickening of the epidermal layer of the skin caused by scratching and rubbing
Lymphocyte	A leukocyte is characterized by its small nucleus and mononuclear appearance that has a central roll in the adaptive arm (memory response) of the immune system
Lymphokine	A hormone that regulates lymphocytes

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Macrophage	A leukocyte that is characterized by its ability to engulf (ingest) foreign substances such as bacteria and able to activate lymphocytes
Major Determinant	The component of a protein that is the main trigger of an immune response
Mast Cells	Leukocytes that have high affinity IgE receptors and are involved in triggering allergies
Mediators of Inflammation	Substances that elicit inflammation, typically made by white blood cells
Mildew	Microscopic fungus that can cause allergic reactions
MMR	Measles, Mumps, and Rubella vaccine
Monoclonal Antibody	An antibody that is specific for one allergenic epitope, typically produced by one B cell
Monocytes	A type of white blood cell that is a circulating precursor of a macrophage
Morbidity	The state of being ill
Morbilloform	A skin rash that resembles measles
Mortality (Mortality Rate)	Death (the number of deaths in a population over a given period of time)
Munchausen's Syndrome	Mental disease in which a patient consistently tries to receive medical care without an illness. In Munchausen's by proxy a person inflicts harm on others (typically children) in order to seek medical attention
Nasal Concha (Turbinates Bone)	Any of the three thin scroll-like bones that form the sides of the nasal cavity. The superior and middle nasal conchae are part of the ethmoid bone; the inferior nasal conchae are a separate pair of bones
Nasal Salute	A horizontal crease on the skin of the nose in allergy sufferers
Natural Killer Cell	A white blood cell involved in killing unwanted cells
Nebulizer	A machine that aerosolizes liquid, typically used in delivering drugs to the lungs
Neocromil Sodium	An asthma drug that blocks mast cells
Neutrophil	A white blood cell that participates in host defence against bacteria and also is involved in propagating acute inflammation
Occupational Asthma	Asthma that develops in an occupational setting usually due to an exposure at the work place
Oral Allergy Syndrome	A set of oral symptoms elicited by allergen exposure
Otitis	Inflammation of the ear
Otitis Media	Inflammation of the ear associated with fluid behind the ear drum
Otorhinolaryngology	The study of ear, nose and throat diseases
Outdoor Allergies	Development of allergic symptoms when exposed to outdoor allergens
Pandemic	An epidemic so wide that vast numbers of people in different countries are affected
Paranasal Sinuses	Air/fluid spaces within the bones of the skull. They are comprised by the frontal, maxillary, ethmoid and sphenoid sinuses based on the bones where they are situated
Patch Test	A skin test that measures delayed reactions to an allergen
Peak Flow Meter	A device used to measure the maximum airflow, typically used to monitor degree of asthma severity
Perennial Allergic Rhinitis	Nasal congestion due to allergies that are present all year long
Phagocyte	A white blood cell that ingests germs and other cells via phagocytosis
Phytophotodermatitis	A skin rash caused by light exposure after direct contact with an allergen from a plant
Pollen	Male fertilizing agent of flowering plants, trees, grasses and weeds. Pollen is a central cause of many allergic reactions
Polyp	Benign soft tissue growth, can be in the nasal passages
Prevalence Rate	The occurrence of a particular disease in a segment of a population
Preventers	Medication that is used to prevent or prophylax against particular clinical problems

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Pruritus	Itching
Pseudo-allergy	A response to a particular allergen that is not triggered by the immune system
Purpura	Purple discoloration in skin typically caused by blood hemorrhage into the skin
Radioallergosorbent Test (RAST)	A blood test typically used to determine the quantity of an IgE molecule
Recombinant DNA	DNA that is generated by a combination of sources or manipulated by genetic engineering
Relievers	Medication that alleviates or reduces symptoms
Respiratory System	The components of the body found involved in respiration, typically the lungs and nose
Retrospective Study	A study that analyses data obtained in the past
Rhinitis	Nasal congestion
Rhinitis Medicamentosa	Nasal congestion typically caused by chronic medication usage such as alpha adrenergic agonists
Rhinorrhea	Clear nasal discharge
Samster's Triad	The triad of asthma, nasal polyps and eosinophilia
SCID	Abbreviation for Severe Combined Immune Deficiency
Sensitization	Immunological memory response characterized by antibodies associated with cellular immunity
Sinusitis	Swelling of the sinuses
Skin Allergies	Allergic reactions involving the skin
Skin Prick Test	Application of allergens to the skin in order to determine the presence of sensitization to an allergen
Skin Testing	Using the skin to test sensitization
Spacer Device	A device that is placed between an inhaler and the mouth, typically used to optimize drug delivery to the lungs
Spirometer	An instrument used to measure the function of the lungs
Spores	Microscopic fungal organisms
Status Asthmaticus	Sustained asthma attack
Steroids	Chemical substances normally produced by the body that have hormone activity, including anti-inflammatory action
Subclinical	Below the threshold for eliciting clinical symptoms
Subcutaneous	Below the skin
T cell	A component of the cellular part of the immune system that is involved in memory responses to foreign substances
Tachyphylaxis	A reduced response of the body to a substance following repeated exposures
Terbutaline	A beta agonist used for the treatment of asthma
Tinnitus	A noise in the ear
Trichophyton	A fungus that typically infects the skin, nails and hair and causes ringworm
Trigger	Something that can aggravate or exaggerate an allergic reaction
Tryptase	An enzyme produced by mast cells that is found in acute and chronic allergic reactions. Its levels in the blood can be used to determine the presence of anaphylaxis
Turbinate	The inner lining of the nasal path that typically swells with allergies
Urticaria	A raised rash characterized by its itchiness
Vaccination	A prophylactic means of stimulating immunological memory and responsiveness
Vasomotor Rhinitis	Nasal congestion typically caused by changes in temperature, odors or smoke
Venom	Toxin present in animals such as bees and snakes that can cause an allergic reaction
Vital Capacity	The amount of air a person can exhale after forced ventilation

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Wheal	A raised bump on the skin often measured by skin prick testing for determining the presence of allergic response to an injected substance
Wet Wrapping	Applying emollients and topical anti-inflammatory agents to the effected parts of the body
Xeroderma	A mild form dry skin often of a hereditary nature
Xerosis	Dryness of the skin of the mucus membrane