

Sneaky Symptoms: Are You Sure You've Got Allergies?

(NAPSA)—Do you suffer from itchy eyes, a scratchy throat, a runny nose and endless sneezing? It could be allergies, but do you know for sure? While more than 20 percent of Americans suffer from allergies, far more people with allergy-like symptoms assume they're allergic and self-treat with allergy medication—without getting an accurate diagnosis from a physician.

According to a recent study from Ohio State University, 65 percent of people using prescription antihistamines—which are indicated primarily for treating allergy symptoms—don't suffer from allergies at all!

Take this quiz and consider what's causing your sneezing and sniffles. Check the appropriate responses to the statements below:

1. Although anyone can develop allergies, people are more likely to do so if they have a family history of allergic disease.
 True False
2. Sneezing, watery eyes and stuffy nose probably mean that I have allergies.
 True False
3. Allergies can cause discomfort, but don't lead to serious health problems.
 True False
4. There is no way to tell for sure if you have allergies.
 True False 

Answers

1. True. A family history of allergies is the most important risk factor for developing allergic disease. If one parent has an allergic disease, a child has a one-in-three chance of developing allergies. The risk increases to 70 percent if both parents have allergies.

2. False. Oftentimes, allergy-like symptoms can be confused with symptoms of a cold, flu or other illness. However, these symptoms have very different underlying causes and require different treatments. Without knowing the true cause of your symptoms, you could end up taking medication that you don't need and that won't work.

3. False. If left untreated, allergies can be more than just a nuisance. They can lead to recurrent ear infections or chronic respiratory problems such as sinusitis or asthma. In some cases, such as with food allergies, they can even lead to a life-threatening reaction.

4. False. The ImmunoCAP Allergy blood test can simply and reliably tell you if you're allergic at all, what you're allergic to and how allergic you are. It is capable of testing for about 500 allergens. Ask your physician about the test; with the right information, you can get the best treatment—sooner.

For more information about allergy testing with ImmunoCAP, visit www.isitallergy.com or call 1-877-862-4948.