

Hay fever (Allergic rhinitis)

Hay fever is an immune response to allergens in the environment resulting in inflammation of the nasal passage. People with hay fever complain of **sneezing, itchy nose, runny or blocked nose**. Sometimes there is associated itchy, teary or red eyes.

Different types of hay fever include:

- ✚ **Intermittent Allergic Rhinitis** (seasonal): symptoms occur less than 4 days per week or less than 4 weeks a year, especially during a certain season.
- ✚ **Persistent Allergic Rhinitis** (perennial): symptoms more than 4 days per week or more than 4 weeks per year.

Habits of patients with allergic rhinitis are:

- *Allergic salute*: when a patient rubs the tip of his/her nose upwards with the hand palm to relieve itchiness.
- *Rabbit nose*: a patient wrinkles his/her nose because of itch.
- *Mouth breathing*: patient breath through the mouth because of blocked nose and this result in dry lips.

Symptoms of hay fever are troublesome leading to:

- ✓ affected daily activities (work/ school/ sports),
- ✓ sleep disturbance
- ✓ difficulties at work or school e.g. difficulty in focus and concentration, memory impairment.

If not treated, **hay fever may result in complications such as depression, anxiety, memory problems or in children irritability, restlessness and difficulty in learning** which could be misdiagnosed as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Treatment include education about avoiding allergens and self-care, medication and in some patients a medical procedure known as immunotherapy to stop the immune system from reacting to substances in the environment.

Dr Mabelane will help with to identify triggers of your allergies and come up with a treatment plan best suited for each individual.