

Allergic rhinitis

Background

Affects up to 1/4 of children and often co-exists with asthma and eczema
Significant effect on quality of life

History

- nasal itching
- sneezing
- nasal congestion
- rhinorrhoea
- reduced sense of smell
- Ask re atopy in general

Risk factors

Sensitization to aero-allergens and parental history of allergic rhinitis are significant risk factors
May be seasonal or persistent

Examination

- nasal congestion and inflammation
- associated allergic conjunctivitis
- signs of atopy

Investigations

- may do skin prick testing if specific allergen suspected
- Allergy testing if symptoms not controlled by routine treatment

Differentials to watch out for

Nasal polyps (cystic fibrosis)
Nasal foreign body (eg crayon)
Deviated nasal septum

Evidence Base

Immunotherapy is the only treatment that alters the disease course and is used if non-responsive to drugs and allergen avoidance

Treatment

- compliance is vital
- allergen avoidance (eg pollen)
- Antihistamines first (cetirizine) for nasal itch and sneezing
- intranasal corticosteroids are second choice
- trial of monteluklast if also asthmatic
- Immunotherapy only if very severe + protracted

What's new?

• Sublingual route immunotherapy is preferable and needs to continue for 3 years to give lasting effect and may prevent future asthma

References

• Allergic rhinitis
Lancet 2011;
378: 2112 - 2122

TAKE HOME MESSAGES

Allergic rhinitis is very common

Try allergen avoidance and antihistamines to start

If very severe, ENT referral is warranted (few require surgery)

This algorithm has been produced by the National Paediatric and Neonatology Clinical Programmes. It is aimed at medical, nursing and allied health professionals working in both primary and emergency care settings.

Amended following suggestions of QIP committee of ICGP . Secondary care treatments highlighted in pink

Revision number:	1.0	Document drafted by:	National Paediatric and Neonatology Clinical Programme
Date of Last Update:	21/1/13	Document Status:	Draft
Approval date:		Document approved by:	
Revision date:			