

Got Allergies?

More people in the United States have allergies today compared with decades ago. Allergies are bad reactions to things around you or that you eat.

In 2010, more than half of Americans were sensitive to at least one allergen. That was the finding of one survey by the National Institutes of Health. Allergens are things that set off allergies. Many allergens-such as dust and mold-are found in the air.

"Allergies [are] increasing over time," said Andy Nish. He is a doctor from Georgia.



Corbis

Allergens in the air aren't the only problem. Kids' food allergies have risen too. Between 1997 and 2007, the number of kids with food allergies jumped 18 percent. Eating milk products and eggs can give some children rashes. Those foods can even cause some people to have trouble breathing.

What's behind the spread of allergies? Some scientists think our immune systems don't have enough to do. Immune systems help our bodies fight germs. But kids today come in contact with fewer germs than their grandparents did. That's in part because more medicine is available. Experts say that when our immune systems have fewer germs to fight, they can get confused. They attack other things, such as milk that we drink, instead.



Getty Images

Other scientists say hotter temperatures are to blame. They say the weather is warmer for longer periods now, so plants bloom longer. Plants release pollen, which is a common allergen.

Doctors do not know for sure what's making allergies increase. But they do know how to treat them with medicine. "There is very good treatment for allergies," Nish says. "No one should suffer with symptoms."

Take Cover!

Dust and other allergens that float into your nose are in for a blast—a cough or a sneeze, that is! Both are natural **reflexes**, or responses, to help keep you from getting sick. Here's a look at the big bursts.

Sneeze

Sneezes start at the back of your throat. Each quick burst can force out up to 40,000 droplets of saliva. The tiny droplets travel at up to 300 miles per hour.

Cough



iStock

Coughs come out of your lungs. Each blast can push out 3,000 saliva droplets as fast as 50 miles per hour. Enough air comes out to almost fill a two-liter bottle.



Alamy

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the text, what are increasing in the United States?

- A. allergens
- B. germs
- C. allergies
- D. reflexes

2. Which of the following best describes the solution proposed in the text for people who suffer from allergies?

- A. The solution is to stay away from dust and mold.
- B. The solution is to stop eating milk products and eggs.
- C. The solution is to hide from anything that causes allergies.
- D. The solution is taking medicine to help with allergy symptoms.

3. Allergies can affect someone's everyday life.

What evidence can be used to support the statement?

- A. "More people in the United States have allergies today compared with decades ago."
- B. "Allergens in the air aren't the only problem."
- C. "Those foods can even cause some people to have trouble breathing."
- D. "But kids today come in contact with fewer germs than their grandparents did."

4. What can be concluded from the passage?

- A. A person with allergies is sick and needs to see a doctor.
- B. A person who sneezes and coughs often may have allergies.
- C. A person who drinks milk and eats eggs will definitely get allergies.
- D. A person who lives in a place with hot weather will never get allergies.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A. Allergies are increasing, but simple steps can be taken to cope with them.
- B. Our own human nature has produced more allergies than ever.
- C. Everyday foods have caused a higher proportion of allergies than ever.
- D. Coughs and sneezes are reflexes to allergens.

6. Read the sentences:

"There is very good treatment for allergies,' Nish says. 'No one should suffer with **symptoms.**'"

As used in the text, what does "**symptoms**" mean?

- A. changes in the body that are signs that a person is sick
- B. changes in temperature that give people allergies
- C. changes in medicine to treat people when they are sick
- D. changes in people's immune systems that cause allergies

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Kids come into contact with fewer germs today, _____ their immune systems get confused and attack other things.

- A. if
- B. after
- C. although
- D. so

8. What can be concluded from the evidence that coughs and sneezes are natural reflexes and from the evidence that our immune system attacks allergens?

9. What two possible reasons for the increase in allergies are explained in the passage? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

10. What can be concluded about the increase of allergies in the future? Use the evidence from the text to support your answer.

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"There is very good treatment for allergies,' Nish says. 'No one should suffer with **symptoms**.'"

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Kids come into contact with fewer germs today, _____ their immune systems get confused and attack other things.

- A. if
- B. after
- C. although
- D. so**

8. What can be concluded from the evidence that coughs and sneezes are natural reflexes and from the evidence that our immune system attacks allergens?

Our body naturally tries to avoid allergens, or things that can cause bad reactions to things around us or that we eat.

9. What two possible reasons for the increase in allergies are explained in the passage? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

First, some scientists think that our immune systems "don't have enough to do." With an increase in medications, our immune systems have fewer germs to fight. Thus, they get confused and begin to attack things such as milk that we drink. Second, some scientists think that because the weather is warmer for longer periods of time, plants bloom and release pollen, a common allergen, for longer periods of time.

10. What can be concluded about the increase of allergies in the future? Use the evidence from the text to support your answer.

The text says that doctors do not know for sure what is making allergies increase. There are two possible explanations-reduced immune system reliance and warmer temperatures. While these are not conclusive, they may explain the future of allergies. If the immune system continues to not need to attack germs, allergies may increase. Second, if the Earth continues to warm up, allergies also may increase.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is a meaning of the word **immune**?

- A. not contained in or deriving from the essential nature of something
- B. a person who is not susceptible to infection by a particular disease
- C. of or relating to or having vessels that conduct and circulate fluids

2. What is another meaning of the word **immune**?

- A. relatively low in price or charging low prices
- B. far beyond what is usual in magnitude or degree
- C. a person who is immune to a particular infection

Please use each answer choice only once. Choose the one word that best completes the sentence.

3. Sometimes people escape prison by trading _____ for their testimony.

- A. immune
- B. immunity

4. Pasteur found a way to make people _____ to some diseases.

- A. immune
- B. immunity

5. Please write your own sentence using the word **immune**.

6. What would you like to remember about the meaning of the word **immune** so that you can use it when you write or speak?

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1. What is a meaning of the word **reaction**?

- A. a transformation in which one or more substances is converted into another by combination or decomposition
- B. solid homogeneous inorganic substances occurring in nature having a definite chemical composition
- C. someone who guides, especially someone hired to show people around a place or an institution and offer information and explanation

2. What is another meaning of the word **reaction**?

- A. a strong belief in a supernatural power or powers that control human destiny
- B. a plant consisting of one or more buildings with facilities for manufacturing
- C. a bodily process occurring due to the effect of some antecedent stimulus or agent

Please use each answer choice only once. Choose the one word that best completes the sentence.

3. It's all part of the _____.

- A. action
- B. active
- C. act
- D. actions
- E. reaction
- F. activity
- G. activities

4. This opposite, or reaction, force is equal in strength to the _____ force.
- A. action
 - B. active
 - C. act
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5. How do physical _____ help your heart?
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6. Physical _____ can cause harm if it is done without taking certain safeguards.
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7. The light and heat are evidence of a chemical _____.

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8. It says here Kilauea is the world's most _____ volcano.

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9. These _____ warn other zebras that danger is nearby.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is a meaning of the word **sensitive**?

- A. relating to genetics or genes
- B. under the level of the ground
- C. responsive to physical stimuli

2. What is another meaning of the word **sensitive**?

- A. without common good sense
- B. relating to living things
- C. able to feel or perceive

Please use each answer choice only once. Choose the one word that best completes the sentence.

3. When I hear a drum or a fire engine or a bird, I use my _____ of hearing.

- A. sensation
- B. sensory
- C. sensed
- D. sensitive
- E. nonsense
- F. senses
- G. sense

4. You use your _____ to observe the weather.

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5. The light _____ film holds the image.

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6. To say they are _____ would itself be _____.

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7. _____ neurons send information from the senses to the brain, telling the brain what is happening.

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8. I ignore my sweaty palms, pounding heart, and the sickening _____ in my stomach that I am making a very bad mistake.

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