

Over-the-Counter Allergy Medications Warrant Caution for Some
Nasal allergy sprays can now be purchased without prescription

Tampa, Wesley Chapel, Carrollwood, Zephyrhills - Florida (March 2014) – The next time you're at the local pharmacy, you may be surprised to see your prescribed allergy nasal spray available over-the-counter. Many drug manufacturers are pushing for this move to make finding relief easier for some of the 50 million Americans with allergies. But this warrants caution for some.

"Allergy sufferers may no longer need a prescription for certain allergy nasal sprays, but they might need an allergist's advice," said allergists Dr. Daniel Reichmuth and Dr. Sami Nallamshetty. "Some medications merely mask symptoms without tackling the root of the allergy. And often patients will find what medication once suppressed their symptoms, no longer does."

The over the counter availability of this new nasal spray may lead to questions from local allergy sufferers. To help eliminate confusion, Dr. Daniel Reichmuth and Dr. Sami Nallamshetty, along with the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) have answered the seven most common questions.

1. **Is it safe?** Not only can the new nasal allergy spray relieve congestion, sneezing and a runny nose, it also does not cause drowsiness and is non-habit forming. Improper use of nasal sprays may cause nasal bleeding. Follow the package instructions and inform your allergist if bleeding occurs.
2. **Can I stop antihistamines?** If you find solely using the nasal allergy spray is helping to suppress your symptoms, you may not need to take an antihistamine. Each person is different and they will have to be the judge of how they feel only using one medication. However, if you're not finding relief from one or both medications, you should speak with your allergist.
3. **Is it safe to give my child?** The medication is approved for children two-years and older. But it may complicate some infections your child might have, so check with your allergist.
4. **Can it be used year-round?** Yes, it is approved for year-round use. Many allergy sufferers that have year-round allergies to pets, dust and mold often find nasal sprays are not enough for symptom relief. Many allergists prescribe immunotherapy (also known as allergy shots), which not only provides symptom relief, but can modify and prevent disease progression.
5. **Will my insurance cover it?** It is unlikely your insurance provider will cover over-the-counter nasal allergy sprays, even if it was covered when it was prescribed.
6. **Do I need to continue following up with my allergist?** Allergy sprays are merely a medication and not a cure for allergy. Because allergies can change over time, it's important to be under the care of an allergist for proper testing, diagnosis and treatment that may go beyond over-the-counter medications. Allergies can also cause symptoms such as chronic sinus infections, nasal congestion or difficulty breathing.

"Allergies and asthma are serious diseases and that's 'nothing to sneeze at,'" said Dr. Daniel Reichmuth and Dr. Sami Nallamshetty. "Misdiagnosis and inappropriate treatment can be dangerous."



Dr. Sami Nallamshetty is a graduate of Harvard Medical School in Boston where she completed a combined pediatric and adult allergy & immunology fellowship program at Brigham and Women's and Boston Children's Hospitals. She is double board certified in pediatric and adult allergy and immunology through the American Boards of Allergy and Immunology and Internal Medicine. She has been distinguished as a Fellow of the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology. Dr. Nallamshetty has published her research in top scientific journals and has been awarded several research grants. Dr. Nallamshetty can be reached at 813-388-6855.



Dr. Daniel Reichmuth is a graduate of Indiana Medical School and at the University of South Florida. He completed his residency in internal medicine (and served as Chief Resident) and fellowships in both allergy and clinical immunology and clinical laboratory immunology. Dr. Reichmuth is dual board certified through the American Board of Allergy and Immunology (www.abai.org) and the American Board of Internal Medicine (www.abim.org). Dr. Reichmuth stays current in both of these boards (Allergy and Clinical Immunology and Internal Medicine) through Maintenance of Certification (MOC). The American Board of Allergy and Clinical Immunology is a conjoint board of The American Board of Pediatrics and the American Board of Internal Medicine. Dr. Reichmuth has also been selected by his peers in the *Best Doctors in America*® Database on numerous occasions. He is currently accepting new pediatric and adult patients at both his Wesley Chapel and Zephyrhills practice locations.