



# Vasomotor Rhinitis

Rhinitis is an inflammation ("itis") of the nose ("rhin" meaning nose, as in rhinoceros). Rhinitis may be further sub-divided into 3 basic types: infectious (as in a cold), allergic, and vasomotor.

**Allergic rhinitis** can be seasonal and occur only when pollen counts are high, such as ragweed in late summer, or it can be perennial and last pretty much year round because of sensitivity to molds, dusts, animals, or cigarette smoke, etc. that are present year round.

**Vasomotor rhinitis** is a term for people who have a stuffy or draining nose, but don't have evidence of specific allergies. The blood vessels (hence the term "vaso") in the linings of the nose appear to be extra sensitive and swell up for no good reason. The nasal drainage is usually clear and can be very heavy depending on the trigger.

**There can be many causes:** changes in the temperature or humidity are major causes, and it seems that dry environments are more problematic for most than humid ones. There are other triggers for some people such as scents in the air (think strong perfumes or air fresheners, cooking odors, and especially cigarette smoke), eating cold, hot, or spicy foods, and even emotional stress may all be involved. Some medications, like reserpine and prazosin, have also been implicated. Sexual arousal or hormonal changes can also result in nasal congestion. Sneezing, which is more common with allergic rhinitis, is usually not a prominent symptom with vasomotor rhinitis.

**Treatment:** Unfortunately, vasomotor rhinitis is sometimes difficult to treat and individualization of a regimen for your symptoms may take some time and fine-tuning. It will also take some detective work on your part to isolate your particular triggers.

If dry environmental conditions are a trigger, then using a vaporizer in your bedroom will be vital. Further, use of saltwater nose spray to keep the nasal lining moisturized will be helpful. Smells are difficult - other than avoiding any environmental vapors that are triggers these will be difficult to manage otherwise. Other causes like rapid weather changes, and emotional stress will be difficult to manage unless you are able to work on your living situation and address and treat the cause of your stressors (see my hypnosis section). Antihistamines usually don't work well, but decongestants containing pseudoephedrine may provide partial relief for many. I have had good luck with many patients with ipratropium nasal spray in a 0.3% or 0.6% formulation used two to four times a

day depending on the individual's response. Steroid nasal sprays don't work well for most, but a few patients have found relief from symptoms with use.