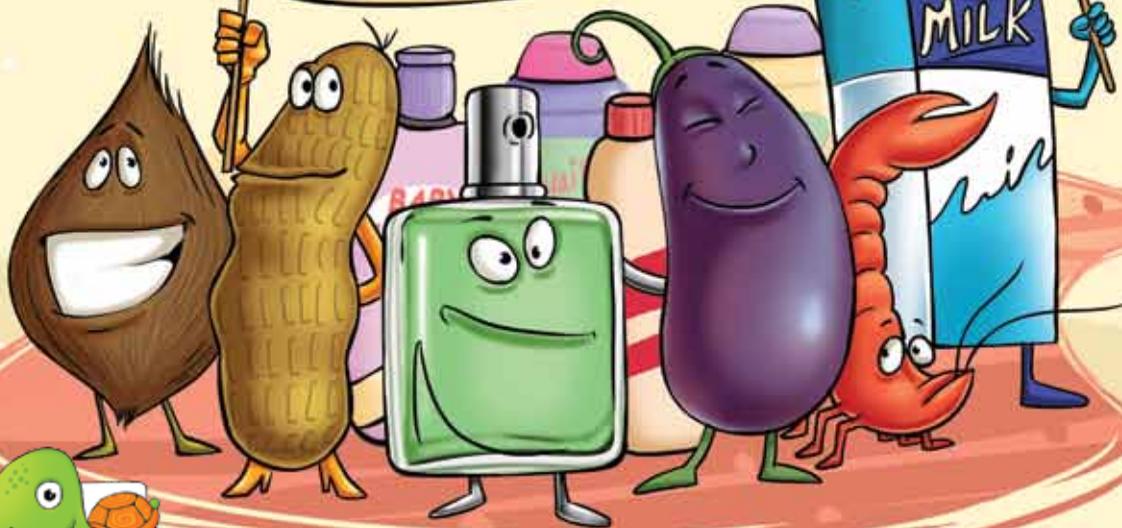


Get Well Soon

# Allergies

Benita Sen



## **A note by Dr R K Pachauri**

Human beings have made great progress in recent years. We have been able to produce a large number of goods and services on a huge scale, and have utilized technology in a wide range of activities. However, all this has come at an increasing cost which has often remained concealed or ignored. Our bodies of water have been polluted. The air around us has a large amount of particulate matter and gases that are not only harmful for our health but also affect the climate of the earth. Overall, we have neglected to take care of planet earth which is home to all of us and all other living species.

Economic development is meant to ensure a higher level of human welfare in this generation as well as for others yet to come. But we know from everything we see around us that water borne and air pollution related diseases are increasing. We can conclude that while we try to give our children a better life, we also harm their health in actual fact.

This series takes a look at some of the common ailments children suffer from, such as stomach problems, allergies, injuries, and fever. While these are all part of growing up, they are becoming a cause of concern, to both parents and their children, primarily because pollution has aggravated these maladies. The books not only focus on the science behind the causes of these ailments; they also point out ways to avoid them. Above all, the objective is to take the scary element out of these common maladies and ensure that the growing-up years are full of fun. Those who read these books would learn how to lead healthy and happy lives.



**R K Pachauri**

Director-General, TERI

Chairman, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

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**teri**

The Energy and Resources Institute



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Disclaimer: This book has been reviewed by a medical practitioner and is meant for general educational purposes only. It should not be considered as a substitute for medical advice. The information provided in this book should not be relied upon to make decisions about a child's health. The family doctor should always be consulted about individual condition(s) and/or circumstances.

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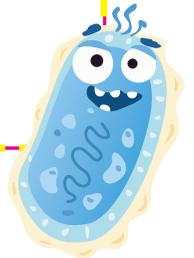
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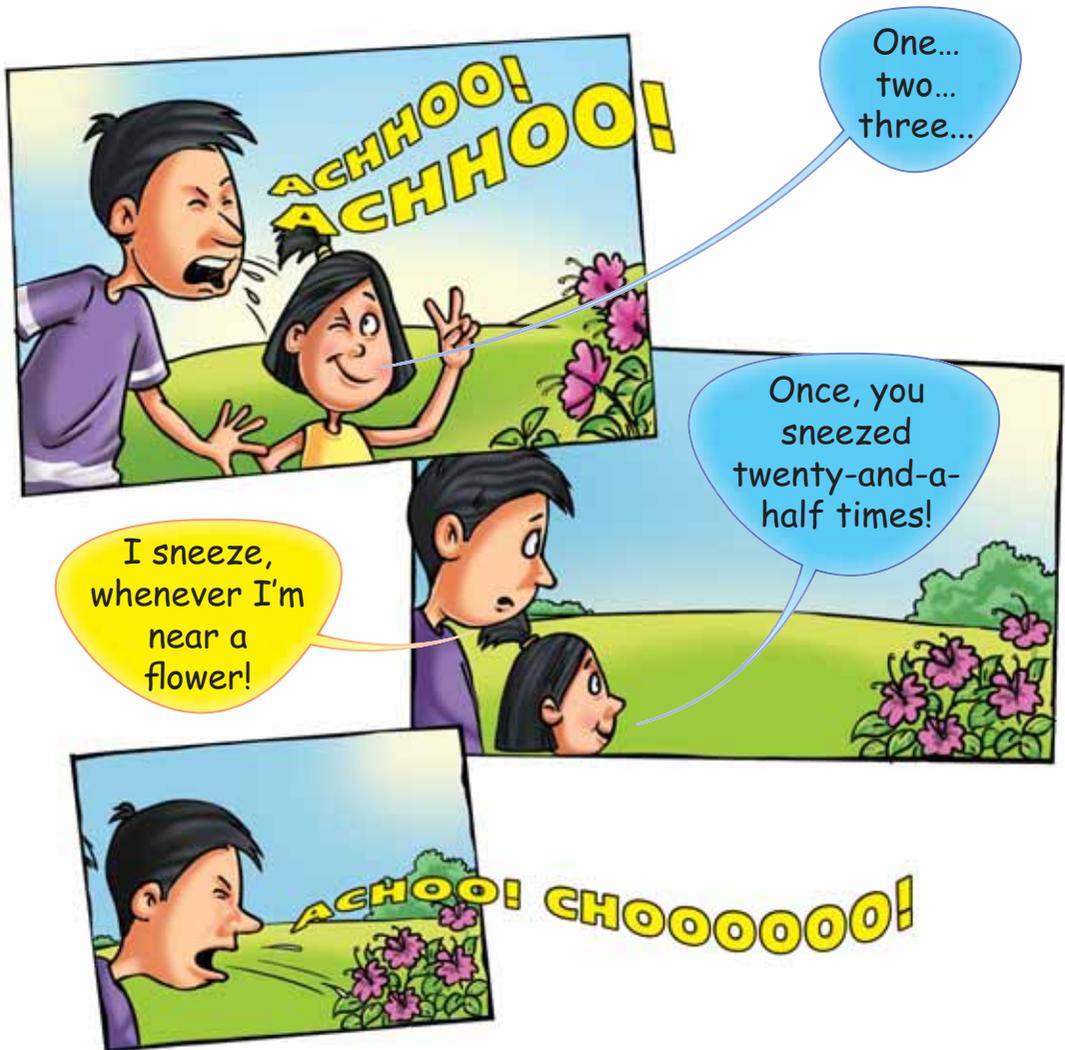


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# ACHHOO! ITCH! SCRATCH! COUGH!



"Achhoo! Excuse me."

Are these the first words you begin the day with? Does your skin feel itchy if you eat sweets made of coconut? Do you go 'cough-cough-cough' when your teacher asks you to rub the board and chalk dust flies around? Does the smell of a freshly painted cupboard give you sniffles and a painful lump in your throat?

## ALLERGY ALERT

Heard the saying, “One man’s meat is another man’s poison”? It means what suits one person may not suit another. Things you are allergic to may not affect even your brother or sister. For example, the peanuts that make you sick could be your sister’s favourite food!

*Paints have chemicals that can cause breathing trouble.*



*Chalk dust can cause throat problems and skin allergy in some children.*



## ACTION REACTION

I love to eat pumpkin,  
But it makes me scratchy.  
Pumpkin doesn't like me.  
It makes my skin patchy!



*Prawn allergy is a common food allergy.*

If any of these sounds like you, chances are, you have an allergy. An allergy is your body's way of telling you what it does not like. In other words, your body is 'allergic' to something. Anything that causes an allergy, like dust, is called an allergen.

Your body's immune system, which fights germs to keep you healthy, does not like allergens. So, as soon as an allergen enters your body, a battle begins. That is what doctors call an allergy.

# YUP, THAT IS AN ALLERGY!



Severe skin itching is called pruritus.

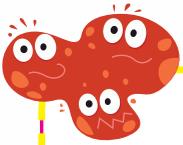
Different allergens make different people react differently.

**SNIFFLE PIFFLE:** If you suddenly get a runny nose for no reason at all, it could be an allergy.

**ACHHOO ATTACK:** Some people begin their day with a series of loud sneezes. Sometimes, they sneeze dozens of times at any time of the day whenever they bump into an allergen.

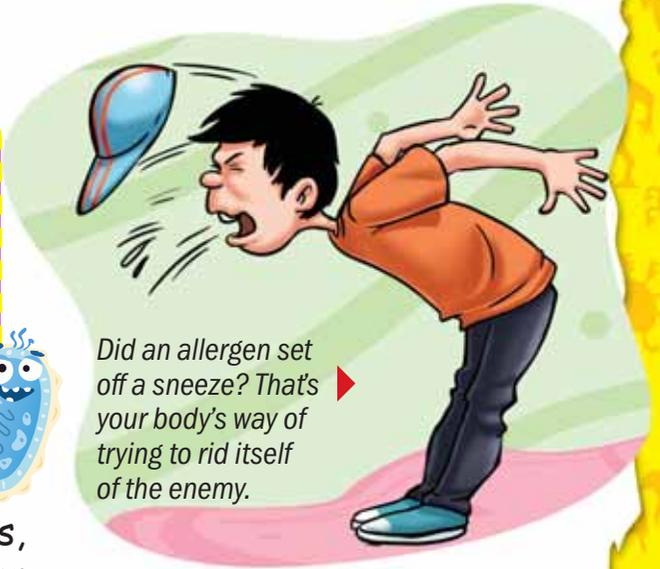
**BRASH RASH:** Some allergies show up as pink, itchy patches on the skin. When the way your skin looks or feels changes and red patches show up,





## ACTION REACTION

Itchy, sneezy, coughy, wheezy.  
My nose is blocked and stuffed.  
Rashy, splotchy, pinky, blotchy,  
I think I've itched enough!



*Did an allergen set off a sneeze? That's your body's way of trying to rid itself of the enemy.*

doctors call it a rash. Sometimes, the patches can work their way up into small bumps. This pink, bumpy rash caused by an allergen is called hives, or urticaria. If the attack is serious, it can cause a skin problem called eczema. That is when a number of round patches appear on your skin.

**LOOEY-POOEY:** A sudden stomach cramp and a sudden urge to pass loose stool after a meal? Feel like throwing up? You probably ate an allergen!

**MY, LOOK AT YOUR EYE:** Itchy, pink eyes and scratchy ears? You know who's here!

**WHEE-ZEY? TO THE DOC, PLEASEY:** Sometimes, allergens can mean serious trouble like breathing problems or may even cause death, if it is not treated in time!

Whatever the sign, if you, your parents, or your teachers think you have an allergy attack, it is best to see a doctor right away.

## ALLERGY ALERT

The word 'allergy' comes from the Greek words 'allos', which means 'other', and 'ergon', which means 'work'.



*Eye allergies are often related to other allergies like hay fever.*

# MEET THE ALLERGENS



You do not have to look too far for allergens. They are almost everywhere!

- Eating vegetables like brinjal, especially those with a lot of seeds, mushrooms, and taro or colocasia ('arbi' in Hindi) can leave some people with an itchy palate (roof of the mouth).
- Many people are allergic to seafood. Their skin may break out into an itchy, pink rash. Sometimes, they even throw up soon after they eat prawns and lobsters.
- Milk, eggs, nuts, wheat, soya, coconuts, and even honey can make you uncomfortable or sick if you are allergic to them.

# Get Well Soon : Allergies



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