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health

Question

Can seasonal allergy attacks develop into a cold?

Answer

Although seasonal allergies cannot technically cause a cold--which results from a viral infection--their symptoms may mimic some of the initial signals of an upper respiratory infection, such as sneezing and nasal or postnasal drainage. It's easy to mistake allergy symptoms for a cold. In fact, allergy patients often describe their symptoms as a "chronic cold"--lasting for an entire season or longer despite the fact that one cannot have a virus for that entire time! Viral infections like the common cold generally last 7 to 10 days, but can last up to 14 days.

However, allergies can make you very tired and mess with your sleep, dampening your immune system and increasing your risk of a virus should you be exposed to one. And worsening seasonal nasal allergy symptoms can definitely lead to sinus infections, causing nasal and sinus congestion, sinus pressure and pain, and fatigue.

Source: *Kathleen R. May, MD, spokesperson for the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology*