Raffles new

A PUBLICATION BY RafflesMedicalGroup

Spotting **An Allergy** On Your Body

Tech My **Allergies Away**

> Guide To **Food Substitution**

The A to Z Of Allergies

Acupressure

For Allergy Relief

Living with Allergies

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The information contained in this publication should not be regarded as a substitute for detailed medical advice in individual cases

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Hello Readers

Singapore is no stranger to allergies – a chronic condition that affects the young to the old. As a Family Physician, I see a lot of patients who walk in with an itch on the skin or a running nose and they wonder what has happened to them. Most of them do not know that they have come in contact with an allergen.

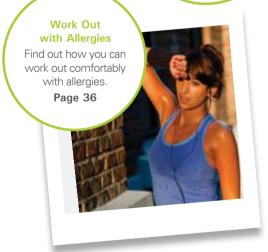
Allergies can happen to anyone and the effects can be life-threatening if not diagnose and treated in time. In our cover story, we share tips to prevent allergy reactions at home, work, outdoors and travel (pages 10 to 13). We also share some common medications prescribed and treatment options for allergies (pages 14 and 15).

Sufferers of nasal congestion and eczema can turn to page 23 for some self-care tips that they can do at home. Try using acupressure to relief allergy discomfort in the head, nose and eyes (pages 34 and 35).

If you have a food allergy, read pages 24 and 25 for a guide to how you can substitute your food allergen with other options. Technology can play a big part in management of allergies. We sieve out some methods (pages 30 and 31) and apps (page 33) that can help manage your condition.

While most allergies cannot be cured, it is advisable to get diagnosed so that prevention can be done to avoid the allergens.





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New Doc on the Block



Dr Md Badrun Nafis Bin Saion Specialist in Paediatric Dentistry Raffles Dental

Dr Badrun graduated from the National University of Singapore in 2000. Since graduation, Dr Badrun served at the School Dental Service, Health Promotion Board and the Paediatric Dentistry Unit of National Dental Centre of Singapore (NDCS).

In 2006, Dr Badrun was awarded a scholarship from NDCS to pursue specialty training at the University Of Melbourne, Australia. In 2011, he graduated with a Doctor in Clinical Dentistry (Paediatric Dentistry). During his speciality training in Paediatric Dentistry at Melbourne, Dr Badrun also worked at the Royal Children Hospital and Royal Dental Hospital where he treated a variety of special needs and medically compromised children.

During his career in the public service, which spans almost twenty years, Dr Badrun has a variety of creative techniques to manage even the most difficult child on the dental chair. Apart from chairside dentistry, Dr Badrun is also experienced with inhalation sedation and general anaesthesia management of children. He enjoys interacting with children and their parents in achieving a state of optimal dental health for the entire family. Dr Badrun is conversant in English and Malay.



Dr Soh Lip Min Specialist in Endocrinology & Consultant Raffles Diabetes & Endocrine Centre

Dr Soh obtained her medical degree from National University of Singapore and her postgraduate qualifications from the Royal College of Physicians, United Kingdom. She also received the Gordon A. Ransome Master of Medicine award in 2007.

She later completed her advanced specialist training in Endocrinology in National University Hospital. In 2011, she was awarded the Academic Medicine Development Award and served as an honorary fellow at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, where she further honed her interest in treating rare neuroendocrine tumours, pituitary, adrenal, thyroid and parathyroid disorders.

Dr Soh helped to set up the endocrine testing protocols, inpatient diabetes programme and osteoporosis guidelines within National University Hospital. She has wide ranging interests in treating common problems such as diabetes, thyroid and osteoporosis, as well as rarer endocrine disorders. Dr Soh also has an interest in managing pregnant women with hormonal disorders, in collaboration with their obstetricians, to achieve optimal outcomes.

Congratulations to our Nurses' Merit Award Recipient



Ms Mary Jane receiving the award from Minister for Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong.

From left: Dr Tan Hsiang Long (Deputy General Manager, Raffles Hospital), Ms Sadiah Mohd Yusof (Manager, Inpatient - Obstetrics & Gynaecology Ward, Raffles Hospital), Ms Mary Jane Mendoza Sangalang (Deputy Manager, Inpatient - NICU & Nursery), and Ms Lilian Yew (Chief Nurse, Inpatient Operations, Raffles Hospital)



Ms Mary Jane Mendoza Sangalang, Deputy Manager, Inpatient - NICU & Nursery, was presented the Ministry of Health Nurses' Merit Award on 18 July 2018.

As one of the 100 nurses who received the award from Singapore's Minister of Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong at this year's ceremony, Ms Mary Jane said." Having been a nurse for 23 years, I find that my greatest impact as a nurse is being able to help ventilated babies recuperate and see them return home with their parents. For me, the biggest challenge is witnessing deaths and having the support the grieving family members. Over the years, I have grown to manage such situations better and now I am able to advise and counsel my team of nurses on how to overcome them."

Congratulations Sister Mary Jane and thank you for your dedication in caring for our patients!

Changes in Clinic Operating Hours



Raffles Medical @ Raffles Holland V

118 Holland Avenue Raffles Holland V Level 5 Singapore 278997 Tel: 6250 1411

Opening Hours

Mon - Friday 8.30am to 9.30pm Sat, Sun & PH 8.30am to 1:00pm 2.00pm to 5.30pm 6.30pm to 9.30pm

Download our app (RafflesMedGp) or visit our website (www.rafflesmedical.com) to access the full list of our clinic operating hours.



Happy Nurses' Day









Nurses' Day Celebration

The mood at Raffles Medical Group was hyped up on Nurses' Day (1 August 2018) as the senior management made their rounds in the hospital to thank our nurses for their relentless care and hardwork. The nurses' were overjoyed when Mediacorp celebrities from the upcoming nursing drama "You Can Be An Angel 3" joined in the celebration. On the same day, three of our nurses received the Raffles' Best Nurse Award 2018.

To thank nurses for their relentless care, an exhibition was held at Raffles Hospital's lobby where members of the public were invited to pen their appreciation messages for our nurses.

Thank you, nurses!



Watch our Nurses' Day video portraying the different characteristics of a nurse



From left: Mr Ken Ng (Chief Executive Officer, NTUC Income), Mr Andrew Yeo (General Manager, Life & Health Insurance, NTUC Income), Dr Morrison Loh (Clinical Director, Raffles Health Insurance) and Dr Loo Choon Yong (Executive Chairman, Raffles Medical Group) at the signing ceremony

Strategic Partnership Between NTUC Income and Raffles Health Insurance

NTUC Income and Raffles Health Insurance (RHI), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Raffles Medical Group, announced a strategic partnership to introduce the IncomeShield Private Specialist Panel in July.

The partnership will offer IncomeShield policyholders access to over 200 medical specialists in private practice spanning across different specialty areas via the panel. RHI will also extend clinical indicator assessment as part of the partnership.

For more information on the partnership, please visit www.income.com.sg/value-added-services/specialist-panel.

Lasting Power of Attorney Review Available at Raffles Medical

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Find out more at www.rafflesmedical.com/LPA or contact us at 6311 2222 for more information.

"Happy Child, Happy You" Parenting Seminar

On 19 May 2018, Raffles Hospital and SingaporeMotherhood.com co-organised a parenting seminar. More than 120 participants attended the seminar "Happy Child, Happy You", and learnt from our panel of experts as they shared advice, strategies and insights on how children develop through their growing years.

Paediatricians from the Raffles Children Centre and Raffles Specialists - Holland V presented on skin and developmental issues in kids, common paediatric surgeries and causes for crying in young infants. Our specialists also shared tips to manage fevers and feeding issues in children.

We would like to thank our sponsors for supporting this seminar.



Our panel of paediatricians speaking at the seminar, (from left to right) Dr Chong Jin Ho, Dr Chitra Ramalingam, Dr Christelle Tan, Dr Joyce Chua, Dr Vidya Ramasamy and Dr Chu Hui Ping.



Dr Christelle Tan sharing with the participants on tips to manage fevers at home



Satisfy your taste buds @ Heritage Food Street

Located at basement 1 of Raffles Specialist Centre, Heritage Food Street boosts a seating capacity of 600 and comprises 15 stalls – of which six are serving halal food. Find local favourites such as chicken rice, fried kway teow and also other cuisines including Japanese and Korean.

Heritage Food Street operates daily, from 7am to 11pm.

Raffles Health Insurance Launches Raffles Shield



Raffles Health Insurance (RHI), a fully owned subsidiary of Raffles Medical Group, launched Raffles Shield to the public from 1 August 2018.

Raffles Shield is a Medisave-approved Integrated Shield Plan (IP) that provides coverage for hospital and surgical expenses. It comprises MediShield Life, a national health insurance plan administered by the Central Provident Fund Board, and an additional private insurance coverage administered by Raffles Health Insurance that enhances the basic coverage provided by MediShield Life.

For more information, please visit www.rafflesshield.com.sg or scan the QR code below. You can also call out hotline at 6286 9988.



New Clinic in China, Dalian

The Raffles Medical Clinic at Dalian is now opened



Raffles Medical – Dalian Anshen Clinic No. 128-223, Jin Ma Road Jin Pu New District, Dalian China 116600

Opening Hours

Mon to Fri 9.00am to 6.00pm

Sa

9.00am to 12.00pm

Telephone

(0411) 8791 5925

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enquiries_dalian@rafflesmedical.com

Living with Allergies

Having allergies may inconvenience your daily life. Specialists of Raffles ENT Centre, Dr Stephen Lee and Dr Charmain Zhao, share tips to keep allergies at bay in your daily life, so you can live normally even with severe allergies. By Queenie Ho

At Home

FABRICS

- Use dust-mite-proof covers for your bedding.
- Change bedsheets, pillowcases and blankets at least once a week.
- Use washable curtains made of plain cotton or synthetic fabric. Clean them regularly to prevent dust from accumulating.
- Use flooring that is easy to clean.
- Shower before you sleep to keep allergens out of your bedding.

FURNITURE

- Avoid upholstered furniture.
- 2 Choose easy-to-clean furniture that are made of leather, wood, metal or plastic.
- 3 Remove items that collect dust and keep furniture minimal.

CLUTTER

- 1 Knickknacks, tabletop ornaments, books and magazines should be removed as they collect dust.
- 2 Store children's toys, games and stuffed animals in plastic bins.







"In general, keeping dust and mould away from your house will prevent allergies from acting up. Avoid smoking in the house."

Dr Stephen Lee, Specialist in ENT Surgery & Consultant, Raffles ENT Centre

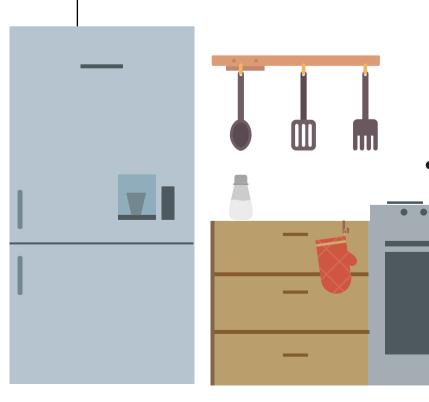
KITCHEN / BATHROOM

- 1 Ensure proper ventilation while cooking and bathing.
- 2 Avoid mould growth by wiping excessive moisture in your refrigerator and check for mouldy or expired food. Clean the dripping pan regularly and replace mouldy rubber seals around doors.
- Scrub the sinks, cabinets, faucets, bathtub, shower and plumbing fixtures regularly to remove mould.

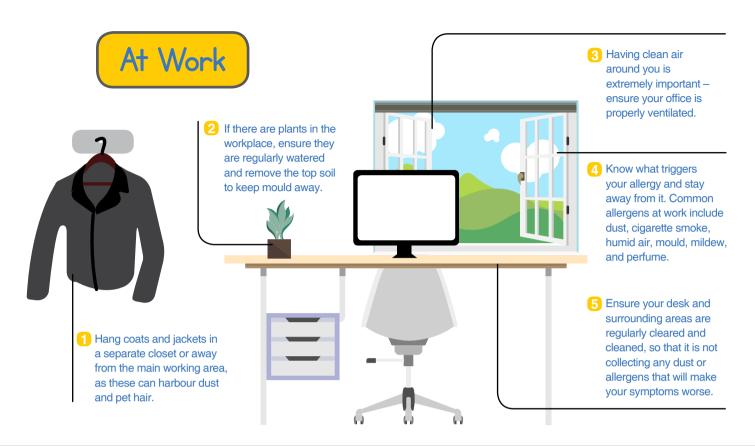
PETS/PLANTS

- If you have respiratory allergy symptoms, keep animals from the living area and bedroom.
- 2 Bathing pets at least once a week may reduce the amount of allergen in their skin or fur.
- Spread aquarium gravel over the soil to help reduce mould growth on your plants.





CoverStory







Travelling can be painful if you need to keep a lookout on the allergens that may trigger allergy reactions.



Travel in peace with the following tips:



If you have sinus pressure due to allergies, arm yourself with medication when you are on a flight.



Air in the plane is very dry, use saline nasal sprays to keep the membranes of your nose moist.



Request for a sunny and dry hotel room away from the pool if you are allergic to dust and mould. If you have space, pack your own pillow or pillow case along. Check if your accommodation provides air filters.



Plan ahead so you can defend yourself against allergy attacks.



If you have a food allergy, inform the kitchen. Avoid any food or ingredient you know that triggers your allergy.



"Don't forget to pack your allergy medication and bring it along wherever you go. You never know when you need it."

Dr Charmain Zhao, Specialist in ENT Surgery & Consultant, Raffles ENT Centre

Si dila

1

Allergies occur when your immune system reacts to a foreign substance or a food that doesn't cause a reaction in most people.

2

A child will have 30 to 50 per cent chance to develop an allergy if one of the parents has an allergy.

3

The severity of allergies varies from person to person and can range from minor irritation to a potentially life-threatening emergency known as anaphylaxis.

Quick Facts on Allergies

6

Anyone can develop allergies. You can develop them as a child, or might not have any symptoms until you're an adult. 5

About one in three people suffer from nasal allergy symptoms in Singapore.

4

While most allergies can't be cured, treatments can help relieve your allergy symptoms.

COMMON ALLERGENS

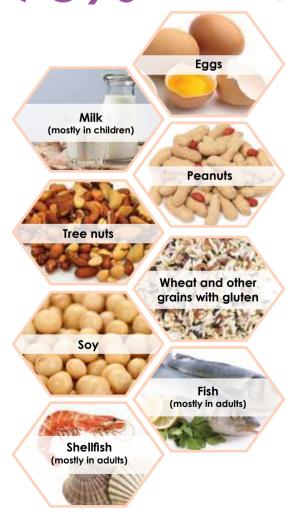
By Magdalene Lee

An allergy is an adverse reaction to allergens, substances outside your body.

Raising trend in the past two to three decades

30 per cent of adults have allergies 40 per cent of children have allergies

90% of food allergies are caused by



Eight Common Allergens

















Reasons for

R se in Allergies

Air pollution

3

Warmer homes and people staying indoors (dust mites)

Moulds from air-conditioning / airborne allergens from chemicals / paints

High FODMAP* diet, processed food, preservatives and colouring

FODMAPs (Fermentable Oligosaccharides, Disaccharides, Monosaccharides and Polyols) are short chain carbohydrates that are poorly absorbed in the small intestine.

Risk Factors

Personal or family history of asthma. eczema, rhinitis or allergies

Younger than 18 years old

Asthma or other allergies



Red eyes, itchy, watery, swollen Eve drops

SKIN

Itchy, rash, swelling

Moisturiser and hvdrocortisone cream



Itchy, stuffy, runny

Nasal saline spray



Sneezing, wheezing

Inhaler



Anaphylaxis: Use of epipen / adrenaline, oxygen and resuscitative measures

Associated nditions

Atopic Dermatitis

Asthma

Sinusitis and infections of the ears or lungs



Food Allergy

Food Intolerance

REACTION

Immediately or within two hours

Up to 72 hours

SYMPTOMS

Skin: Itch, rashes

Airways: Difficulty breathing, wheeze

Circulatory: Low blood pressure

Digestive tract: Abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea

Bloating, IBS

Eczema

Joint pain

Lethargy

Low mood

Headache



Dr Wong Wei Mon, Family Physician & Consultant Raffles Medical - Holland V



Dr Chong Jin Ho, Specialist in Paediatrics & Consultant Raffles Children Centre



Medication

The type of medication used to treat an allergic reaction depends a lot on its severity. The following is a short guide to some of the more common medications used for an allergic reaction.

▼ CHRONIC ALLERGIES (HAY FEVER / DUST MITES)

DRUG NAME

- Cetirizine
- Fexofenadine
- Loratidine

USES

- Non-drowsy
- Can be bought over the counter
- Long-term use

There are generic versions of these drugs available now. This means they are much more affordable if taken for a long period of time.

DRUG NAME

Nasal Corticosteroids

- Fluticasone
- Mometasone
- Triamcinolone

USES

- Recommended if one has a clinical history of repeated episodes of rhinitis and sinusitis
- Meant for extended period of time and in cycles
- May take a couple of days for it to become effective
- Prolonged use may cause side effects like nose bleeds and in severe cases, perforations of the nasal septum

These medications are prescribed and can be obtained only from your doctor.

DRUG NAME

Leukotriene Receptor Antagonist

Montelukast

USES

- Leukotrienes are natural substances found in your body
- Leukotrienes can worsen symptoms of asthma and allergies
- Montelukast is not an anti-histamine or a steroid but a leukotriene receptor antagonist
- Originally used to treat asthma but also used to treat allergic conditions like eczema and allergic rhinitis

These are drugs that need to be precribed by your doctor.

▼ SEVERE ALLERGY REACTIONS

DRUG NAME

• Epinephrine

USES

- Administered via intramuscular injections in anaphylatic reactions
- Works quickly in the body to dilate constricted airways to help breathing and maintain blood pressure by constricting blood vessels
- Patients with severe allergic reactions to insect stings or peanut allergies may also purchase prefilled syringes in case of inadvertently encountering these allergens

DRUG NAME

Corticosteroids

USES

- Usually given intravenously or via intramusucular injections
- Helps reduce the effects of swelling caused by an allergy

DRUG NAME

• Anti-histamines Diphenhydramine

USES

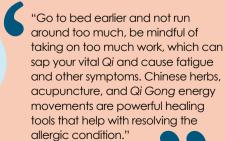
- Administered intravenously or intramuscularly
- Works faster in reducing the effects of histamine compared to oral administration

Alternative Treatments

TCM and Allergies

According to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), allergies are a sign from your body that one or more organ systems are imbalanced or have an energy deficiency.

TCM sees the weakened immune system as the crux of the problem. Allergy symptoms arise when the immune system is not strong enough to fight allergens - dust, pollen, food etc. A two-fold approach is taken in the management of allergic conditions: Addressing and containing the symptoms when they arise, and strengthening immune function so that the body is not overwhelmed by the allergic response to pathogens. This includes making key lifestyle adjustments and recognising when your body is running low on Qi.



Physician Tay Jia Yin
Raffles Chinese Medicine

Immunotherapy

If you have a known allergen that is causing you to have unavoidable and severe reactions, you may be wondering whether there are other options beyond avoidance, oral medications and carrying around prefilled syringes. Immunotherapy may be a better option for you.

The treatment involves you receiving small concentrations of allergen via injections a few times a week at the beginning of the course. The frequency will get less as the concentration of allergen given to you increases but the course may take months or even years to complete. The objective of the therapy is to slowly teach your immune system to be less sensitive to an allergen. The treatment is customised to an individual, and you may receive injections to more than one allergen at a time.

You may be instructed to take an anti-histamine before each immunotherapy injection, and you may be observed in the clinic for up to half an hour in case of a severe reaction.

Have a chat with your family physician to discuss if immunotherapy injections could help you. If so, your doctor can help to refer you to a specialist for assessment. An allergy specialist will determine whether you are a suitable candidate for immunotherapy.

Note: Immunotherapy works if you are allergic to pollen, mould spores, cat and dog dander, dust mites and insect stings. Immunotherapy is not used to treat food, latex and drug allergies.

THE Ato **OF ALLERGIES**

Courtesy of the Mayo Clinic News Network By Shermaine Lee

Symptoms

Allergy symptoms, which depend on the substance involved, can affect your airways, sinuses and nasal passages, skin, and digestive system. Allergic reactions can range from mild to severe. In some severe cases, allergies can trigger a life-threatening reaction known as anaphylaxis.



An insect sting allergy can cause:

- A large area of swelling (edema) at the sting site
- Itching or hives all over the body
- Cough, chest tightness, wheezing or shortness of breath
- Anaphylaxis

Allergies occur when your immune system reacts to a foreign substance — such as pollen, bee venom or pet dander — or a food that doesn't cause a reaction in most people.

Your immune system produces substances known as antibodies. When you have allergies, your immune system makes antibodies that identify a particular allergen as harmful, even though it isn't. When you come into contact with the allergen, your immune system's reaction can inflame your skin, sinuses, airways or digestive system.

The severity of allergies varies from person to person and can range from minor irritation to anaphylaxis potentially life-threatening emergency. While most allergies can't be cured, treatments can help relieve your allergy symptoms.



Hay fever, also called allergic rhinitis, can cause:

- Sneezing
- Itching of the nose, eyes or roof of the mouth
- · Runny, stuffy nose
- Watery, red or swollen eyes (conjunctivitis)

A food allergy can cause:

- Tingling in the mouth
- Swelling of the lips, tongue, face or throat
- Hives
- Anaphylaxis





Atopic dermatitis, an alleraic skin condition also called eczema, can cause skin to:

- Itch
- Redden
- Flake or peel



Anaphylaxis

Some types of allergies, including allergies to foods and insect stings, can trigger a severe reaction known as anaphylaxis. A life-threatening medical emergency, anaphylaxis can cause you to go into shock. Signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis include:

- · A drop in blood pressure
- Severe shortness of breath
- Skin rash
- Light-headedness
- A rapid, weak pulse
- Nausea and vomiting
- Loss of consciousness

When to see a doctor

- If you have symptoms you think are caused by an allergy, and over-the-counter allergy medications don't provide enough relief.
- If you have symptoms after starting a new medication, call the doctor who prescribed it right away.
- For a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis), call 995 or seek emergency medical help. If you carry an epinephrine auto-injector, give yourself a shot right away.
- Even if your symptoms improve after an epinephrine injection, you should go to the emergency department to make sure symptoms don't return when the effects of the injection wear off.
- If you've had a severe allergy attack or any signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis in the past, make an appointment to see your doctor. Evaluation, diagnosis and longterm management of anaphylaxis are complicated, so you'll probably need to see a doctor who specialises in allergies and immunology.

Drug allergies

A drug allergy is the abnormal reaction of your immune system to a medication. Any medication — over-the-counter. prescription or herbal — is capable of inducing a drug allergy.

Drugs commonly linked to allergies

Although any drug can cause an allergic reaction, some drugs are more commonly associated with allergies.

These include:

- · Antibiotics, such as penicillin
- · Pain-relievers, such as aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen
- Chemotherapy drugs for treating cancer
- Medications for autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis

The most common signs and symptoms of drug allergy are hives, rash, shortness of breath, runny nose, itching or fever. A drug allergy may also cause anaphylaxis in serious cases.

Other conditions resulting from drug allergy

- Less common drug allergy reactions occur days or weeks after exposure to a drug and may persist for some time even after you stop taking the drug. These conditions include:
- · Serum sickness May cause fever, joint pain, rash, swelling and nausea
- Drug-induced anaemia A reduction in red blood cells, which can cause fatigue, irregular heartbeats, shortness of breath and other symptoms
- · Drug rash with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms (DRESS) -Results in rash, high white blood cell count, general swelling, swollen lymph nodes and recurrence of dormant hepatitis infection
- Inflammation in the kidneys (nephritis) - Can cause fever, blood in the urine, general swelling, confusion and other symptoms



Care Network

Raffles Medical Group collaborates with Mayo Clinic as a member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network

SPOTTING AN ALLERGY

Mouth

Medical Condition

 Oral Allergy Syndrome (OAS)

Symptoms

- Itch, tingling, burning sensation in lips, mouth and / or throat
- · Swelling of lips and tongue
- Abdominal cramps
- Vomitting
- Diarrhoea

This is a condition in which a person develops allergic symptoms within minutes of consuming certain raw fruits, raw vegetables or nuts a reaction from histamine release later in the gastrointestinal tract. Abdominal cramps, vomiting and diarrhoea may ensue. Allergic symptoms of the eyes and nose described above may also develop.

Common Allergens



FRUITS

Apples, apricots, pears, cherries, kiwi, mango, plums, peaches, nectarines, tomatoes

SOY MILK



VEGETABLES

Carrots, celery, legumes, such as mange tout, beansprouts and raw peas

Raw potatoes or raw parsnips

NUTS

Skin

Medical Conditions

- Dermatitis
- Hives

Symptoms

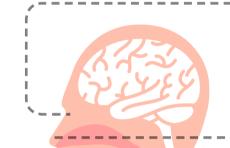
- Itchiness
- Rash
- Vesicles / blisters

It usually starts with a mild itch or rash that causes you to start scratching. Scratching can intensify the itch, leading to a vicious itch-scratch cycle that can compromise the protective layer of the skin. This causes further allergen exposure and aggravates the inflammatory process. In addition, chronic scratching and / or skin inflammation can lead to thickening of the skin.

Contact with certain chemicals such as PPD in hair dyes and latex in gloves can trigger an allergic contact dermatitis.

ON YOUR BODY

Scratching, sneezing and wheezing. How do you spot an allergy? Dr Wong Wei Mon, Family Physician & Consultant, Raffles Medical, tells you what and where to watch out for. By Joanna Lee

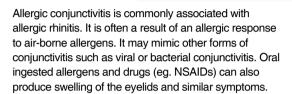


Eyes

Medical Condition

Symptoms

- Allergic conjunctivitis • Swelling of the eyelids
 - · Itchy eyes
 - Tearing
 - Eve redness



Nose

Medical Condition

Allergic rhinitis

Symptoms

- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Loss of smell

Allergic rhinitis is an allergic response to outdoor or indoor allergens. Seasonal allergic rhinitis, is known as hay fever. The symptoms are very similar and they are often confused with a cold.



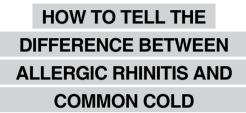
Medical Condition

Bronchitis

Symptoms

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- · Shortness of breath

Inhaled allergens can lead to inflammation of the airway and the development of asthma-like symptoms, as a result of narrowing of the airways (bronchoconstriction) and the increased production of mucus in the lungs. Bronchoconstriction can also develop in rare instances of a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).



The signs and symptoms can be similar. Therefore, it can be difficult to tell which one you have.

	Allergic Rhinitis	Cold
Signs and symptoms	Runny nose with thin, watery discharge, no fever	Runny nose with watery or thick yellow discharge, body aches, low-grade fever
Onset	Immediately after exposure to allergens	1 to 3 days after exposure to a cold virus
Duration	As long as you're exposed to allergens	3 to 7 days

When to See a Doctor

See your doctor if:

- $ilde{1}$ You can't find relief from your hay fever symptoms
- Allergy medications don't provide relief or cause annoying side effects
- You have another condition that can worsen hay fever symptoms, such as nasal polyps, asthma or frequent sinus infections

Many people, especially children, get used to hay fever symptoms, so they might not seek treatment until the symptoms become severe. But getting the right treatment might offer relief.



Select Raffles Health Screening Services and Vaccinations Online



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Checkout and receive email



Make your appointment* (24-hour Call Centre)



Cashless checkout after completion of service



*Applicable for health screening. Prices are inclusive of GST. Terms and conditions apply.



Scan here for hassle-free health service







Self-care Tips for

Eczema and Nasal Congestion

Are you suffering from eczema or nasal congestion? Here are some self-care tips that you can adopt at home.

By Joanna Lee

Eczema

Skin dryness, accompanied by itching, is a common feature of eczema. Many inevitably fall into the vicious cycle of scratching in the hope of relieving the itch, but this usually worsens the condition. Try the following methods to keep the itch at bav.



Stay Moisturised

People with eczema have a defective skin barrier function that is vulnerable to external stimuli. Using moisturisers can help to alleviate symptoms and repair damaged skin barrier. Although it can be a tedious process and results may not be apparent immediately, but it will go a long way in keeping it under control.



Use Unscented Soaps

When showering, use unscented soaps or shower gels that are formulated for sensitive skin that do not lather. Avoid taking long showers and use lukewarm rather than hot water. This is because hot water can cause skin dryness.



Ice It

Instead of scratching when you itch, try pressing on the skin or applying ice over it. Cover the itchy area if you cannot avoid scratching it. For children, it might help to trim their nails and have them wear gloves when they sleep at night.



Stay Cool

Stay in a cool environment or use a humidifier. Hot, dry indoor air can worsen itching and flaking.



Wear Comfortable Clothes

Wear cool, smoothtextured clothing because such materials help to reduce irritation when in contact with the skin.



Specialist in Dermatology & Consultant Raffles Skin & Aesthetics

For more tips, subscribe to



Raffles Hospital and watch "7 Tips to Manage Eczema Without Seeing a Dermatologist" (http://bit.ly/7tipseczema)

Nasal Congestion

A nasal wash can help relief cold and allergy symptoms.

Add a teaspoon of salt and a pinch of baking soda to 250 ml of clean warm water.



Fill a bulb syringe or a neti pot with this solution.



Start with one side of the nostril, lean forward over a sink, tilt your head to an angle of about 45 degrees, run the solution into a nostril and out the other.



Give your nose a good blow.

Now repeat this process with your other nostril.



Dr Michael Wong Senior Family Physician Raffles Medical

Guide to Substitution



By Dr Melvyn Wong

If you or a loved one has an allergy, it is important to read ingredient labels to ensure that ingredients do not contain and are not processed with the allergens.

RICH IN

- Calcium
- Vitamins A, B-12 and D
- Potassium
- Protein

- Riboflavin
- Niacin
- Phosphorus

SUBSTITUTES

For Milk

- Almond milk
- · Soy or rice milk (fortified with calcium and vitamin D)
- Coconut milk

- For Butter & Cheese
- · Dairy-free margarine
- Soy or diary-free cheese



- Protein
- Iron
- Omega-3 fatty acids
- Calcium

- Vitamins D and B
- Folate
- Zinc



- Fibre



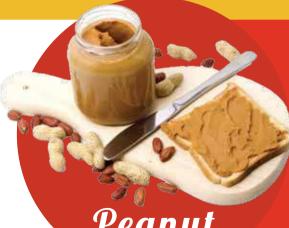
For Soybean

- For Soy Milk-based Products Broccoli / asparagus / carrots
 Cow's milk

 - Cheese

Note: Check if you are allergic to cow's milk before consuming







- Protein
- Niacin
- Manganese



- · Sunflower seeds / sunflower seed butter
- Cashews
- Soy nuts / soy nut butter
- · Almonds / almond butter
- Macadamia nuts
- Hummus



RICH IN

Complex carbohydrate

Wheat is a key ingredient in several food products, including pasta, bread and snacks. Wheat-free cooking will be less challenging with the help of the following substitutes:

SUBSTITUTES

For Wheat Flour

- Rice, potato, sorghum or flour
- Tapioca or potato starch

For Pasta

• Corn / rice pasta

For Bread

• Gluten-free / wheat-free bread

Wheat-Free Snacks

- Rice cakes / crackers
- Popcorn
- Fruit snacks
- Potato / corn chips



- Protein
- Omega-3 fatty acid



For Protein

• Meat / poultry / grain

For Omega-3 Fatty Acid

- Walnuts
- Canola / flax seed oil
- Spinach / kale / brussels sprouts

Note: Artificial seafood, such as imitation crab sticks, may contain small amounts of fish or shellfish. It's best to check the label and / or consult your doctor if you are unsure of the safety in consuming the product.









- Protein
- Vitamins B-12 and D
- Riboflavin
- Phosphorus



While we can avoid eating eggs, this is also a common ingredient for baking. Eggs generally serve as either a binder (holds a recipe together), leavening agent (helps food rise) or both.

For Binding

- Smashed banana
- Ground flax seed mixed with warm water
- Applesauce or pureed fruit
- Gelatin blend

For Leavening

 Vegetable oil mixed with water and baking powder



"Food allergies may cost you your life. It is important to know what you are allergic to and avoid them. It is also important to read product labels and check with manufacturers to determine if a product is made in facilities that produce products with your allergens."

Ms Bibi Chia, Principal Dietitian, Raffles Diabetes & Endocrine Centre



Some say that the reaction to allergy episodes are the same, while some tell you that you will never have new allergies. Others might say that consuming a little will not hurt.

How well versed are you about food allergies? Are you endangering your life with these myths? By Ashley Tuen

It's either a mild or severe allergy

Mild or severe reactions are unpredictable. On several occasions, you may experience mild reactions to a certain food, but there can be times when a sudden life-threatening reaction hits. Such reactions could also be affected by other variables.



A food intolerance and food allergy can show some similar signs and symptoms. The latter causes an immune system reaction that affects many organs in the body and can be severe or life threatening. On the other hand, symptoms of food intolerance are generally less serious and often limited to digestive problems.



Food allergies will not develop later in life

A study has shown that almost half of food allergies in adults appear in adulthood. Some develop an allergy to food that they never had a problem with. Sometimes, a child can outgrow a food allergy but only to have it reappear in adulthood.



You are safe if you don't see the allergen



Allergens can appear unexpectedly. For example, a shellfish could be dipped in milk to mask their fishy odour or the French fries, which you are about to have might eat, been fried in peanut oil. To play safe, it is best way to ask how a food has been prepared or read the food labels carefully.



Having a little shouldn't hurt



A severe reaction can be triggered even by a small trace of food allergen. Also, take note in avoiding cross-contact between safe food and your food allergen. Remember, reactions to food allergy are not predictable and can be affected by other variables.



Sanitising my hands with a hand sanitiser can help to remove food allergens



The effective way is to wash your hands with soap. Hand wipes work too. On the other hand, washing with plain water or using hand sanitiser will not remove allergens but instead, spread the protein around.



Children will outgrow their allergies



Some may outgrow but it largely depends on the type of food that the child is allergic to, as well as the severity of the allergy. Among the common food allergies; milk, soy, egg and wheat allergies are those that children most often outgrow by the time they are in their late teens. Others such as peanuts and tree nuts tend to cause a more severe reaction and are less likely to be outgrown.



Antihistamines should work well in an allergy episode



"Most allergy reactions are due to the body's release of histamine when encountering an allergen. Treatment with an antihistamine should help to alleviate the symptoms. However, in some situations, the reaction may be too strong for antihistamines alone to counter and this may require medication like adrenaline that would directly counter the reaction," explains Dr Goh E Shaun, Specialist in Emergency Medicine & Consultant, Raffles 24 Hour Emergency.



Preventing Food Allergy

Prevention is always the best cure. Here are some ways you can reduce the chances of having an allergic food reaction.

- Read the food labels
- Bring your epinephrine along with you
- While dining out, check what goes into the food

Can your child inherit a food allergy?

"The relation between genetics and food allergy is not clearly proven at present," explains Dr Chong Jin Ho, Specialist in Paediatric Medicine & Consultant, Raffles Children Centre. Epigenetic mechanisms, including environmental factors, may play a role in the development of food allergies.



Preoccupied with a single leaf, you won't see the tree. Preoccupied with a single tree, you'll miss the entire forest.

Takuan Soho

I specialise in emergency medicine because...

I was interested in caring for patients with acute and immediate health issues. Emergency medicine has also equipped me with the skills and ability to save lives and look for better outcomes to treat patients with critical illnesses.

I'm motivated by...

The fact that I have the ability to care for patients in critical moments and in acute situations.

One little known fact about being an emergency medicine specialist is...

We are trained to handle all sorts of situations even when we have limited equipment to assist us in our work. Over time, nothing becomes too unusual or bizarre for us.

A typical work day for me...

Is that unpredictability is the norm. It is part of the beauty of emergency work. Anything can come through our doors and we manage the situation accordingly. I would usually start my day at work by 8.30am. My day involves seeing about 15 to 20 patients. This includes reviewing patients who were seen by the emergency resident physicians but require further expert opinion or assistance in formulating a management plan. I usually end the work day at 5.30pm, but there are times when I stayed past 7pm to manage very ill patients. Ending my day with some self-reflection is what I would usually do.

The most rewarding thing about my job...

Comes from the challenge in managing patients where odds are stacked against them. I feel good when I am able to help, whether in small or big way.

The most challenging part of my job is...

Emergency medicine does not function in isolation and we need to communicate with other departments for continuation of patient care. While sometimes referring patients to other specialties can be challenging, but they become opportunities to collaborate and provide better care to patients.

One impressionable case that I have encountered is...

I had to manage a patient who arrived at the hospital, via an ambulance, in shock from a severe infection. He was in a serious state with unrecordable blood pressure and needed to be fully resuscitated with invasive respirator support. I felt relieved that he managed to pull through and survive the odds. It made me realised how resilient the human body can be. Through this patient, I have learnt to always give my patients a chance by trying my best to resuscitate and optimise them fully. I have also learnt to not give up without first doing all that I can for my patients, as I may be the only chance they will ever get.

Important tips

- Take charge of your own health by reading up and discussing with your doctors about any health issue that you encounter.
- 2. Learn to manage acute health situations. For example, when to see a family physician and or how to recognise situations that warrants an emergency.
- 3. Pick up lifesaving skills. The most basic is cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as you will greatly benefit from it. The knowledge and skill to perform CPR on another person can make a huge difference to either a loved one or a stranger in need.



Tech my Allergies Away

Allergies can be bothersome or even life-threatening, depending on the severity of your condition. We share ways technology can help you manage your condition better. Psst... these can be great gifts for persons with allergy. By Magdalene Lee

Air Purifiers

Portable air purifiers are compact, stand-alone appliances designed to keep the particulate levels of an enclosed space low. There are three main types of air cleaners available in the market with some that comes with a combination of the features.

- lonisers impart negative charge to the particles
 that subsequently stick to surrounding surfaces or are filtered out;
- 2 Electronic air cleaners removes particles by electrostatic precipitation; and
- High Efficiency Particulate Absolute or HEPA air cleaners remove particles by mechanical filtration and diffusion.

In general, air purifiers can be effective in filtering off hazardous particles in the air. That said, its effectiveness is dependent on factors such as the room size, the level of air borne contaminant, the rate at which the pollutant is being delivered (air flow rate), and the exposure time.





Allergy Wearables

Mostly still in testing, some of these wearables include allergy detection strips that can be used to test foods for offending allergens. Others claim to measure air quality, temperature, humidity, atmospheric pressure, ambient light and UV (sun) exposure so you can assess if you should stay in or out.



Hypoallergenic Bedding

Hypoallergenic products are largely unregulated, but it means that the product has substances and fabrication process that will not cause an allergic reaction to most people.

Dust mites thrive in warm, humid environments – eating dead skin cells and resting in dust-collecting bedding, fabric, carpet and furnishings. Dead dust mites and their droppings form up to 10 per cent of the weight of your two-year-old pillow. If you are itching after getting on bed, it's probably time to toss out that old pillow of yours.

One of the easiest ways is to cover your bedding with dust mite covers to prevent dust mites getting to their food source – your dead skin flakes. Secondly, you can consider latex, wool or silk bedding as they wick away warm moisture that dust mites thrive in.

Washers and Dryers

Washing your clothes above 60°C would kill dust mites that may be on your clothes or bedding. Most frontload washers come with such functions. There are even washers that remove allergens, bacteria and stains left by creams and emollients from clothes. Don't forget to opt for detergents that are fragrance-free and dyefree! Use only what you need and do not overload it for the best desired results.

If you are allergic to pollen, sunning your clothes may not be an option. That's when the dryer can become your best friend. Dryers can also amp up the heat and effectively kill off any dust mites residing in your clothes after washing.

A Final Note

Dr Raymond Choy, Senior Physician, Raffles Medical advised: "Allergic reactions range from itchy rashes to swelling of airway and breathing difficulties which can be life-threatening. Leveraging on cutting-edge technologies will help us to prevent and manage allergies in a better, safer and more effective manner. However, we cannot fully depend on technologies itself. Instead we should consistently keep ourselves well informed and educated on allergies and its preventive measures. Prevention is always better than cure."





SkinPrick and PatchTest

Which allergens are you allergic to?

The Skin Prick and Skin Patch tests can help to identify the allergens that you are allergic to. Not only can you reduce your exposure to allergens, thus reducing allergic symptoms, you can also reduce your reliance on costly medications and improve your quality of life.



Is the Skin Prick test the same as Skin Patch test?

No. They are both different tests that serve to investigate the source of your allergies.

- The Skin Patch test involves substances to be placed on the skin surface to identify trigger factors for skin inflammation (i.e. Contact Dermatitis).
- The Skin Prick test introduces the suspected allergens into the body to be in contact with your immune system to test for reactions.

Raffles Skin & Aesthetics offers both the Skin Prick and Skin Patch tests customised to suit your needs.

For more details or to make an appointment with our specialists, please call 6311 2340.







Apps for Allergies Management

By Magdalene Lee

We picked out seven types of apps for allergy sufferers and just about anybody who knows someone who's allergic.

Recipes



Yummly

Use these recipe apps to prepare delicious home-cooked foods that are safe for allergic persons.

Food diary



Foody, Cara

Jot down what you eat on these apps to detect what's causing the allergic reaction.

Educational games





Allergy Reality, Wizdy Diner

Try these fun and interactive games to learn what foods contain common food allergens.

Food alternatives



Substitutions

Life can still go on even if you are allergic to certain common foods. These apps provide alternatives for you to replace allergens in your diet.

Pollen and air



Air Matters, Plume Air Report

If you have pollen, knowing the air situation before you venture out could save you much grief and discomfort.

First aid





Red Cross, St John Ambulance

Recognise and treat allergic reactions and other conditions with these first aid apps.

Food





ipiit, Allergy Basket, Shop Well

Don't have time to study every food label while marketing? These apps help you avoid common food allergens.

Acupressure for Allergy Relief

By Magdalene Lee

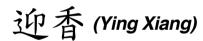
Acupressure has long been used to improve health, alleviate pain and discomfort. If you suffer from allergy, acupressure is also useful for easing discomfort in the head, nose and eyes.

Ms Tan Weii Zhu, TCM Physician, Raffles Chinese Medicine shares five acupressure points (acupoints) that can help relieve allergy symptoms. To stimulate the acupoints, use the tips of the thumbs or forefingers to apply gentle pressure and hold for one to three minutes.

You can repeat several times a day or as and when the discomfort arises. However, take care not to apply too much pressure as skin in the facial region is generally thin and fragile.



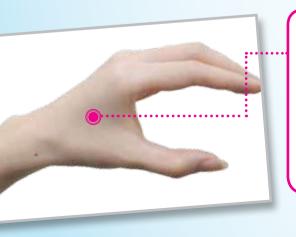
ACUPOINT #1



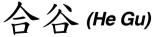
Location: On each side of the nose, next to the nostrils

BENEFITS

- · Opens up the nasal airways, helps ease nasal blockage
- · Useful for reducing stuffiness and runny nose
- Eases sinus pain in the cheeks (maxillary) and the nose bridge (ethmoid) regions







Location: On the back of the hand (dorsal area), between the metacarpals of the thumb and forefinger

BENEFITS

- Eases headaches and sinus pain
- Helps improve nasal allergies



ShapeUp

Work out with allergies

By Shermaine Lee

Are your allergy symptoms dampening your motivation to work out? We know how important and beneficial exercising is to our body and mental health, but there is chance that those suffering from an allergy might be reluctant to work out for fear of worsening those symptoms.

However, allergies should not be a reason to hold you back from exercising. While exercising may make you feel worse when you are suffering from allergy symptoms, it will not aggravate them. We help guide you comfortably through your workout by sharing some tips when you are going through an alle

Don't forget to warm up

According to The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, doing warm ups help reduce allergic symptoms. Ideally, you should spend a good 10 minutes stretching and boosting cardio to reap in the benefits.



Take note of your surroundings It is important to consider your surroundings when

It is important to consider your surroundings when you exercise.

Indoor exercise – If the gym is like your second home, chances are that your allergies will aggravate as allergens are easily spread by contact with other gym rats using the same equipment and machines.

If your gym is giving you the sniffles, consider moving your workout to an indoor pool where the air is much warmer and humid, making it easier to breathe as it helps clear nasal congestion.

Outdoor exercise – Try wearing a mask and sunglasses to protect yourself from airborne allergens such as grass or flower pollen and dust particles. Avoid running in areas with high pollution such as congested roadways and near factories. It is advisable to run after it rains to help avoid airborne allergens from irritating you.





Engage in exercises that promote proper breathing like Yoga and Pilates. These exercises focus on fundamental breathing techniques that help strengthen your heart and lungs, ultimately decreasing your allergy symptoms over time.

End your workout with steam

Indulge yourself in a steamy shower or make use of the sauna if your gym has one. The steam will keep you relieved as it loosens up the mucus that is clogging up your nasal.

Run cooler water over yourself for the next few minutes. The change in temperature will further dispel mucus in the sinuses and bronchial tract for some clean and clear breaths.

Avoid using over-the-counter pain relievers or decongestants

Decongestants can alleviate nasal congestions in a flash. But on the downside, it contains a stimulant (pseudoephedrine) that increases your heart rate and blood pressure, and hinders with your body's ability to regulate its own temperature, making it a health risk when exercising. In addition, some over-the-counter pain relievers contain drugs that may thin your blood, resulting in a bleeding risk.

Be sure to allow at least an hour interval between the time exercise and the time you take the allergy medication. Be careful not to consume medications that contain ephedra or ephedrine while exercising.

*Though over the counter medicines are easily accessible, it is recommended to consult a doctor for medical advice to control your allergies better.

Stay hydrated

To keep your allergy symptoms at bay, staying hydrated is especially important if you are exercising while on allergy medication. This is because the medication often dehydrates your body, and this may leave you feeling dizzy, tired or have muscle cramps.

Having adequate water makes you feel stronger and work out more effectively.



Breathing through your mouth is sometimes necessary when you have a nasal congestion. However, the air that enters through the mouth does not humidify properly and this results in a laboured breathing. Moreover, nose hairs help trap air particles and filter air into your lungs naturally.

Try using a humidifier in your room or a nasal spray without decongestant medication to relieve your congestion.



Though it can be tough to stay active when allergy symptoms are weighing you down, just remember that your symptoms will get less aggravating with better cardiovascular health!



Ask the Experts

What are the types of treatment methods for chronic sinusitis?

Off-the-counter medications or decongestants are useful in the initial stages as symptom relief medication. They however, do not change the final outcome. The use of endoscopes and CT scans have allowed very precise diagnosis and

following this, there are now endoscopic sinus surgery techniques as well as balloon sinuplasty techniques that have advanced the results of treatment.

Dr Stephen Lee Specialist in Ear, Nose and Throat Surgery & Consultant Raffles ENT Centre



How can I tell if my child is suffering from an allergy or having intolerance towards certain foods?

Keep a food diary on the foods that your child eats. Use it to also keep track of the symptoms that they may have due to food allergy, and how soon after the ingestion of food do such symptoms occur. More notably, always seek medical advice from a doctor.

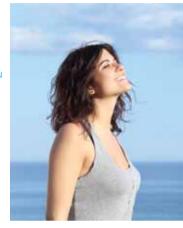
Dr Chu Hui PingSpecialist in Paediatric
Medicine & Consultant
Raffles Children Centre



What is sunlight allergy? How common is it?

Sunlight allergy, also known as polymorphous light eruptions, usually occurs when itchy red rash appears on the sun-exposed skin. It is not common in Singapore. You should consult a dermatologist if you suspect you have sunlight allergy.

Dr Chong Yong Yeow Specialist in Rheumatology & Consultant Raffles Internal Medicine Centre



The skin is a common site where allergy symptoms manifest. What might be the cause?

Common skin allergy conditions include eczema and hives. Some cosmetics or laundry detergents can also make certain people break out in an itchy rash. If it happens to you, you may be allergic to the chemicals in these products. Dyes, household cleaners, and pesticides used on lawns or plants can also cause allergic reactions in some people.



Dr Wong Wei MonFamily Physician & Consultant Raffles Medical

Connect with Raffles

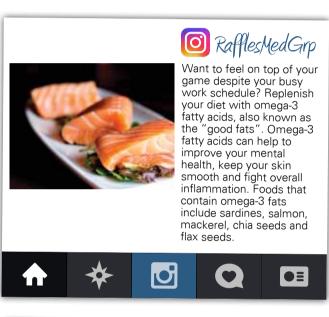
We aim to empower you with the latest health news and tips, as well as for you to learn more about the people behind Raffles. Stay connected with us on social media.















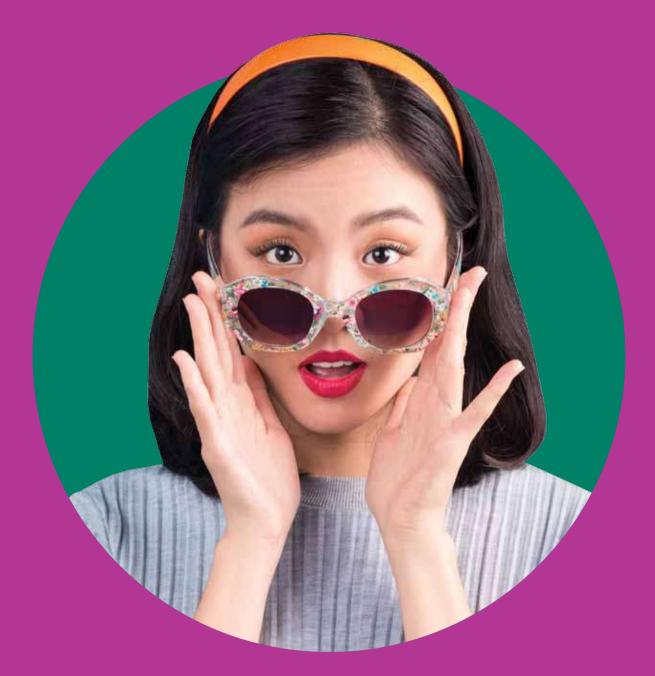


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