

Allergy Statistics

- Estimates from a skin test survey suggest that allergies affect as many as 40 to 50 million people in the United States.¹
- Allergic diseases affect more than 20% of the U.S. population.²
- Allergic diseases are the sixth leading cause of chronic disease in the United States.¹
- At least 35.9 million people in the United States have seasonal allergic rhinitis (hay fever).³
- Approximately 14.1 million physician office visits each year are attributed to allergic rhinitis.⁴
- Immunotherapy is ultimately successful in up to 90% of patients with seasonal allergic rhinitis and in 70 to 80% with perennial allergic rhinitis.⁵
- The estimated overall costs of allergic rhinitis in the United States in 1996 totaled \$6 billion.⁶
- It is estimated that in 1998, increased absenteeism and reduced productivity due to allergies cost U.S. companies more than \$250 million.⁸
- Sinusitis develops in approximately 31 million Americans each year.⁹
- Chronic sinusitis affects nearly 35 million people in the United States.¹⁰
- People suffering from sinusitis miss an average of four days of work each year.¹⁰
- There are more than 18 million office visits to primary care physicians resulting in a diagnosis of sinusitis annually.¹⁰
- In 1996, overall health care expenditures attributable to sinusitis in the United States were estimated to be over \$5.8 billion.⁷
- There is an association between sinusitis and asthma. The incidence of sinusitis in asthmatic subjects ranges from 40 to 75%.¹⁰
- Allergic drug reactions account for 5 to 10% of all adverse drug reactions, with skin reaction being the most common form.¹
- Penicillin is a common cause of drug allergy. Anaphylactic reactions to penicillin cause 400 deaths.¹¹
- Allergic dermatitis (itchy rash) is the most common skin condition in children younger than 11 years of age. The percentage of children diagnosed with it has increased from 3% in the 1960s to 10% in the 1990s.¹²
- Acute urticaria (hives) is common, affecting 10 to 20 percent of the population at some time in their lives. Half of those affected continue to have symptoms for more than six months.¹
- Contact dermatitis and other eczema was diagnosed at over 8.5 million office visits to physicians and at 499,000 hospital outpatient visits.¹³
- Atopic dermatitis is one of the most common skin diseases, particularly in infants and children. The estimated prevalence in the United States is 9%. The prevalence of atopic dermatitis appears to be increasing.¹⁵
- 8% of children younger than six years experience food intolerances. Of this group, 2 to 4% appear to have allergic reactions to food. In adults, an estimated 1 to 2% are sensitive to food or food additives.¹⁶
- Peanut and/or tree nut (e.g. walnut, almond and cashew) allergy affects about three million Americans, or 1.1% of the population.¹⁷
- It is estimated that more than 150 people die annually from anaphylaxis to food.¹⁸

- At least 40 deaths occur annually in the United States from reactions to insect stings.¹⁹ A severe allergic reaction known as anaphylaxis occurs in 0.5 to 5% of the U.S. population as a result of insect stings.²⁰
- Venom immunotherapy prevents systemic reactions in stinging insect-sensitive patients 97% of the time.²⁰
- Estimates of the prevalence of allergy to latex allergens in the general population vary widely, from less than 1% to 6%.²¹
- Certain individuals, including health care workers who wear latex gloves and children with spina bifida who have had multiple surgical procedures, are at particularly high risk for allergic reactions to latex. Atopic individuals (those with allergies) are at an increased risk of developing latex allergy.¹²
- Approximately 220 cases of anaphylaxis and 3 deaths per year are due to latex allergy.²²

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