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Keep your company informed with important health information

This e-newsletter is designed to benefit you and your employees, so please feel free to forward it to family, friends and co-workers!

As always, we hope you enjoy this edition and would like to hear from you with any questions, concerns, or suggestions. Send us an email at news@alliantservices.com.



Alliant's Health e-Newsletter is published monthly for our clients and their employees.

Your comments, story ideas, and suggestions are welcome. Please email them to: news@alliantservices.com



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Allergy Vs. Cold Symptoms

Allergies and cold symptoms are often hard to tell apart, even for the medical profession. Colds are caused by different viruses and will attack the immune system. The viruses that cause colds are contagious. After a couple of weeks, the immune system will fight off the virus. Allergies, on the other hand, are caused by an immune system that is overactive. The body mistakes harmless irritants for germs and attacks them. Allergies are not contagious.

Nasal Congestion

Nasal congestion is a common allergy symptom when the immune system releases chemicals in response to an allergen. This causes the blood vessels in the nose to swell and causes the lining of the nose to become swollen. With an allergy, you will have an itchy nose. This usually starts in the back of the nose and is the body's reaction to the irritant, along with frequent sneezing. The nose is trying to get the allergen out of the nose. A discharge of fluid will come from the nose.

With a cold, between one and three days of catching the cold virus, you will have a slight burning sensation in the nose and throat area. Nasal congestion is common and sneezing will be loud and deep and not as often as if it was an allergy. The nose will be runny also with a discharge and the mucus is clear at the beginning of the cold.

Eyes

With an allergy, you will have watery eyes and itchy eyes often; whereas with a cold you will rarely have itchy, watery eyes.

Mucus

With allergies, there is a discharge of mucus and this will be clear and constant. A cold will produce mucus and be clear at the beginning of the cold but as the cold continues, the mucus will be yellow to green. A sign that there could be an infection is a tint of green in the mucus instead of being yellow.

Fever

Colds rarely have a fever but will have some body aches and sometimes fatigue. With allergies, there is never a fever or aches, but there is sometimes fatigue.



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Cough and Sore Throat

With colds, there is often a cough along with a sore throat. Allergies sometimes can have a cough or sore throat but it is more common with a cold.

Duration

With allergies, the duration can be days to months; whereas with a cold, duration is only between 3 and 14 days.

People Get Hungrier When They're Starved for Sleep

People who are trying to stay trim may want to make sure they get plenty of sleep. In a study, researchers found that normal-weight young men ate a Big Mac's-worth of extra calories when they'd gotten four hours of sleep the night before compared to when they slept for eight hours.

Given the findings, and the fact that people have been sleeping less and getting fatter over the past few decades, "sleep restriction could be one of the environmental factors that contribute to the obesity epidemic," they write in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

A number of studies have linked shorter sleep duration with higher body mass index (BMI) -- a measure of weight in relation to height used to gauge whether someone is overweight or obese. But no experimental studies to date have actually looked at what happens to a normal-weight person's eating patterns when he or she sleeps less.

To investigate, Dr. Laurent Brondel of the European Center for Taste Sciences in Dijon, France, and colleagues looked at sleep, eating, and energy expenditure in 12 healthy young men across two 48-hour sessions.

Two days served as a control period, during which the study participants stuck to their normal routines but kept track of their sleep, eating and activities in a diary. During the second two-day period, the men went to bed at midnight and woke up at 8 a.m. on one day, and on the other day went to bed at 2 a.m. and woke up at 6 a.m. They were allowed to eat as much as they liked.

After the night of short sleep, the researchers found, the men took in 22 percent more calories, on average, than when they were allowed to sleep for eight hours. They ate more at breakfast and dinner, but not at lunch. The average calorie increase was about 560.

The findings make it clear that people need to do their best to get an adequate amount of sleep so their bodies can function properly, Brondel and Davenne add. "It is time to understand that sleep is not just losing time, besides the recovery processes that occur, there are many other functions (energy conservation, memory and so on) which are going on."

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