

Why allergies are more than irritating

A toolkit to help employees understand the serious health risks of allergies



Educate employees on the impact of allergies

Allergies may not seem like a serious health concern. And, for some people, they aren't. But for millions of people around the world, allergies are deadly serious. There are many different kinds of allergies, and none of them are curable.¹ At best, they are manageable. At worst, they are debilitating and deadly.

Here are some impacts of allergies on health and healthcare costs:¹

- Allergies are the sixth leading cause of chronic illness in the U.S. The annual cost of allergies exceeds \$18 billion.¹
- Allergic rhinitis, also called hay fever, affects 6.1 million children and 20 million adults.¹
- Bad reactions to medicines/drugs may affect 10 percent of the world's population. These reactions affect up to 20 percent of all hospital patients.
- In the United States, people visit the emergency room about 200,000 times each year because of food allergies.
- Food allergies cost about \$25 billion each year.¹

According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, occupational or work-related asthma can result in long-term lung damage, loss of productivity, and disability.¹ People who suffer from allergies are more likely to develop occupational asthma. And people can become sicker at work because they can't avoid exposure to common triggers.

It is challenging to provide materials that cover the full spectrum of allergies. MetLife has created this employee education campaign "Why allergies are more than irritating" which focuses on respiratory (inhaled) and food allergies.

What's in the toolkit?

- Campaign objectives
- Marketing materials

Campaign objectives:

- Educate employees on the serious health risks associated with allergies
- Provide recommendations for how to manage allergies to minimize debilitating or life-threatening reactions
- Raise awareness of the dangers of food allergies, so they can be prepared to make accommodations to keep employees safe

Marketing materials:

1. Campaign emails

- **Week 1:** Should you be alarmed about allergies?
- **Week 2:** When you take a bite and it bites you back
- **Week 3:** A little sneezing or respiratory distress?

2. Short articles

- Help! I can't breathe! I may be having a food allergy
- Tips for managing food allergies at work
- Is it a cold, nasal allergy, or allergic asthma?
- Why doesn't my body just get used to allergens?

3. Flyers

- Basic facts about food allergies
- Is your common cold actually a chronic allergy?
- Diagnose, avoid, treat: How to manage allergies

1. Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, "Allergy Facts and Figures," March 14, 2018, accessed at <https://www.aafa.org/allergy-facts/>, November 2020

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