

Understanding Nasal Polyps

Nasal polyps typically develop in adulthood, in the 30s or 40s.

1 Introduction

Nasal polyps are soft, painless growths of inflamed tissue lining the inside of the nose or sinuses. They occur most often in people with asthma, allergies, repeat infections or inflammation in the nasal passages. While small nasal polyps may not cause symptoms, large growths or groups can block the nose, leading to breathing problems, lack of smell and infection.

2 Causes

Polyps develop due to prolonged or repeated inflammation of the mucous membranes lining the nose or sinuses. It is believed that allergies and infections are a cause of this inflammation. Genetics may also play a role, as those with family members with nasal polyps are more likely to develop them. Other health conditions associated with nasal polyps are:

- Chronic rhinosinusitis
- Asthma
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hay fever

3 Symptoms

Small polyps may not cause any symptoms, but as they grow, some common symptoms can include:

- Headaches
- Stuffy nose
- Runny nose
- Facial or teeth pain
- Decreased sense of smell
- Decreased sense of taste
- Snoring
- Postnasal drip
- Itching around the eyes

4 Treatments

Not all patients can be cured of nasal polyps, but treatment will aim to reduce the inflammation as well as the size of the polyps. The first step usually includes a nasal steroid spray and nasal saline rinses. From there, treatment will differ depending on the patient's symptoms, age and severity of the condition. Other forms of treatment may include oral steroids, injections or outpatient surgery.

Did you know?

About 20% of patients with chronic rhinosinusitis have nasal polyps.

For more information on nasal polyps and supportive resources, please visit aaaai.org.

References:

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/15250-nasal-polyps>

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<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/nasal-polyps>

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