

What are common reasons of post-nasal drip? Treatment of post-nasal drip

Post-nasal drip is when secretions drips down from back of your nose into the throat. There are many common reasons of post-nasal drip. First, we shall discuss about the reasons of postnasal drip followed by treatment of its causes.

We produce a small amount of mucus in our nose and sinuses which drains back from the nose into the throat which we unconsciously swallow. But this does not cause any symptoms. This mucus is primarily used to trap any particulate matter in the inhaled air, moisturize and humidify the inspired air and keep the lining of nose and sinuses moist.

Symptoms of post-nasal drip:

Post-nasal drip can present with many symptoms which primarily include

- Feeling of secretions dropping backward from the nose into the throat
- Chronic sore throat,
- Chronic cough
- Frequent desire to swallow
- Frequent desire to clear throat
- Husky voice or hoarseness
- Pain in the ears
- Acid reflux symptoms.

These symptoms may get worse with allergen exposure, exercise, in hot dry weather, during pregnancy and some medications can make it worse.

Causes of post-nasal drip:

There are many causes of post-nasal drip. The most common causes include

- Viral upper respiratory tract infection
- Allergic rhinitis
- Sinusitis
- Vasomotor rhinitis
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease
- Enlarged tonsils or adenoids,
- Deviated nasal septum
- Possible impacted foreign body especially in kids.

Alcohol and diuretics can make post-nasal drip worse or any medication which makes someone dehydrated.

Examination findings:

Patients with post-nasal drip may have obvious secretions on throat examination. The nasal lining may be swollen along with nasal polyps or signs of sinus infection. There may be a deviated nasal septum as a reason for post-nasal drip. An X-ray can be performed which can

show secretions in the sinuses or nose along with the prominent polyps, deviated nasal septum and other abnormalities.

Treatment of post-nasal drip:

The treatment of nasal drip is dependent on its cause. If it's acute viral illness, the symptoms generally go away within few days and doesn't warrant any treatment. Supportive therapy includes plentiful oral liquids to stay hydrated, avoid dehydration/significant caffeine or alcohol or diuretics. Using humidifiers in dry hot weather can be helpful. If there is an acute bacterial infection or sinusitis, antibiotic along with nasal decongestant or saline spray can be helpful. Reflux disease may require treatment with medications to control that along with other maneuvers like increase raising the head end of the bed and avoiding any alcohol or caffeine at night-time along with having a gap between dinner and retiring to bed.

People who have got significant allergic rhinitis may have a chronic post-nasal drip and that may require nasal steroid, oral or nasal antihistamine, short course of pseudoephedrine and sometime oral steroid.

People with particular allergic reaction to allergens, may benefit from immunotherapy.

If someone suffers from chronic post-nasal drip, it is important to get a thorough examination by a qualified physician.

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