

THE ALLERGY AND ASTHMA CLINIC, INC.

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NEWSLETTER

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ALLERGIES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

An estimated 45 million Americans (20% of the population) have some type of allergy and, in many people, these allergies first appear during infancy or childhood. It is not surprising, then, that allergic disorders rank first among children's chronic diseases. Hay fever, also known as allergic rhinitis, is the most common of all allergy problems. It is characterized by a runny, itchy nose, sneezing, postnasal drip and nasal congestion as well as itchy, watery and red eyes and chronic ear problems. Despite its common name, "hay fever", these allergy problems can occur at any time of the year -- seasonally or year-round.

Untreated allergies often adversely affect learning in children and adolescents. Nasal congestion can disrupt sleep due to micro awakenings causing daytime sleepiness. A secondary effect of all this is absenteeism, "presenteeism" (inattention, distraction, lack of concentration),

irritability and restlessness, mood disturbances, and even social and family problems. In fact, allergic diseases are among the most common causes of school absenteeism in the United States, where millions of school days are lost as a result of such disorders.

Due to the resulting irritability, tiredness, inattention, lack of concentration, sleep disturbances and daytime sleepiness, untreated allergic rhinitis can reduce short term memory.

Some studies have correlated pediatric allergic rhinitis to attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), based on the fact that many children with ADHD are atopic and suffer allergic symptoms, including sleep disturbances, which in some cases could explain cognitive patterns seen in ADHD, such as daytime fatigue, inattention, irritability and impulsiveness.

The impact of allergic rhinitis in children and adolescents can extend

beyond the school setting to affect quality of life in all its aspects, as in any other age group. According to a recent consensus review, it is accepted that allergic rhinitis in children, and its complications, can lead to emotional disorders (shame, loss of self-esteem), family problems (parent anxiety, overprotection, hostility), and even to an increased risk of depressive disorders. All of this logically may increase the likeliness of school failure.

The correct management of allergic rhinitis can reduce the impact of the disease upon the future health of children and adolescents, avoid complications, and improve quality of life and school performance.

Don't let allergies keep you or your child from reaching maximum potential. Treatment options have never been better. Please contact us and let us help you and your family manage your allergies and feel your best.