

# Allergy

## Introduction

Between 30% and 40% of people are diagnosed with an allergic condition at some time in their life, and 6% of GP consultations are for allergies. The prevalence of allergic conditions has increased considerably in recent years, and is now a significant burden for patients and the NHS.

Acute allergy is commonly due to an IgE-mediated Type 1 hypersensitivity reaction. Chronic allergy is much more complex and is due to a variety of mechanisms. Allergy can cause a wide range of clinical conditions including urticaria, anaphylaxis, atopic eczema, allergic rhinitis, asthma and food-related symptoms. The symptoms can vary from very minimal to life threatening. Identifying allergens in individual patients can be difficult and time-consuming meaning it is often difficult to give patients an accurate cause for their symptoms.

Primary Care is not well placed to provide quality allergy care, as practitioners are usually not trained in allergy. Frustratingly, specialist allergy services are often difficult to access.

## Aims of module

The aims of this module are:

- to update Primary Care clinicians on the causes of some of the common and important allergic conditions
- to describe the clinical presentation of some of the common and important allergic conditions
- to provide guidance on best practice in relation to diagnosis/testing and management of these conditions
- to identify further resources to allow PBSGL members to improve their knowledge and understanding of allergy based on their personal educational requirements.

This module will not cover asthma. For those wishing further information on this condition comprehensive asthma guidance can be found at <http://www.sign.ac.uk/pdf/SIGN141.pdf>.