

## Millions of Americans With Allergy-like Symptoms May Not Have Seasonal Allergies

**New Screening Tool Helps Distinguish Between Seasonal Allergies and Nonallergic Vasomotor Rhinitis**

(NAPS)—A new questionnaire developed by a nationally renowned allergist and clinical investigator in cooperation with Wallace Laboratories may help millions of Americans find out whether their nasal congestion, rhinorrhea, sneezing, and/or postnasal drip are the result of seasonal allergies or a condition called nonallergic vasomotor rhinitis.

While these symptoms typically are associated with seasonal allergic rhinitis, they actually may be attributable to nonallergic vasomotor rhinitis. This condition can be triggered by exposure to strong odors such as perfumes, automotive exhaust fumes and paint fumes, to changes in temperature and humidity, and even to ingestants such as spicy foods or alcoholic beverages.

“Because of similarities in symptoms, nonallergic vasomotor rhinitis can be very difficult to distinguish from allergic rhinitis, and many health professionals aren’t as attuned to nonallergic vasomotor rhinitis as they are to allergic rhinitis,” according to Phillip Lieberman, MD, a practicing allergist and clinical investigator, who is Clinical Professor of Medicine, Division of Allergy and Immunology, University of Tennessee. “The same way you or I would feel on the third day of a cold is how these people feel every day.”

Recently published data indicate that more than 50 percent actually suffer from a nonallergic rhinitis component. This information, published in a medical text and a peer-reviewed medical journal, revealed higher than previously believed incidences of nonallergic rhinitis and mixed rhinitis (that is, coexisting allergic rhinitis and nonallergic rhinitis). The higher incidences are significant because these conditions are treated somewhat differently from allergic rhinitis.

Typically, allergic rhinitis patients are given a second-generation oral antihistamine to relieve their symptoms such as runny nose, itchy, watery eyes, and sneezing. However, these medications are not indicated for nonallergic vasomotor rhinitis.

Like many rhinitis sufferers, Michelle suffers from a combination of allergic and nonallergic rhinitis symptoms. “It feels like I have a cold every day with conges-



tion and sneezing,” this resident of Memphis explains. “People aren’t terribly sympathetic. They just say, ‘Oh, you’re sick again; it seems like you’re always sick.’”

A new screening tool, a one-page questionnaire developed by Dr. Lieberman, in cooperation with Wallace Laboratories, can help determine the type of rhinitis a patient has. The questionnaire helps patients and physicians identify the triggers of the patient’s “allergy-like” symptoms, so that avoidance and/or a more effective treatment can be chosen.

Patients should consult their physicians to help determine whether they suffer from seasonal allergic rhinitis, nonallergic vasomotor rhinitis, or a combination of both.

Although second-generation oral antihistamines, such as Allegra, Claritin or Zyrtec, are not FDA-approved for the treatment of nonallergic vasomotor rhinitis, Astelin® (azelastine HCl) Nasal Spray, 137 mcg, a nasal antihistamine with unique properties, has been shown in clinical studies to be effective in treating both seasonal allergic rhinitis and nonallergic vasomotor rhinitis.

ASTELIN Nasal Spray is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of seasonal allergic rhinitis and for the treatment of nonallergic vasomotor rhinitis.

For more information about Astelin® Nasal Spray, see the full prescribing information for the product. For additional copies of the Patient Rhinitis Questionnaire, please visit [www.aboutrhinitis.com](http://www.aboutrhinitis.com) or write to Wallace Laboratories at Half Acre Road, PO Box 1001, Cranbury, NJ 08512-0181.

<sup>1</sup> Settupane RA, Settupane GA. “Nonallergic Rhinitis.” In: Kaliner MA, Ed. *Current Review of Allergic Diseases*. Philadelphia, PA:Current Medicine;2000:111.