



Preventive Health – Allergic diseases and anaphylaxis

The Australian Government is investing \$26.9 million to address allergic diseases and anaphylaxis, which affects millions of Australians.

The funding will support the creation of a National Allergy Council (NAC) and a National Allergy Centre of Excellence (NACE), as well as increasing access to support for sufferers of allergic diseases.

The leading allergy groups in Australia, the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy, and Allergies and Anaphylaxis Australia will receive funding towards the NAC.

This investment will also drive increased focus, through the NAC on prevention, steps to improve treatment and patient management, and improving access to trained allergy health care professionals.

A National Allergy Centre of Excellence is being supported through funding for the Murdoch Children's Research Institute to expand its Centre for Food and Allergies Research, to centralise research on food allergies, as well as drug, vaccine, insect, and pollen allergies.

The Australian Government is committed to seeing progress on a patient-centred, shared care approach to allergy care that engages health care professionals and their patients, to deliver the right care, at the right time, from the right health professionals, in the right place.

A shared care model would also aim for:

- a multidisciplinary approach to allergic disease management
- upskilling health professionals through expanded training resources and new models of training delivery, particularly for regional, rural and remote health professionals
- scoping requirements for inclusion of allergy training in the curriculum for health and education degrees, and
- support and advocacy for sufferers of allergic disease.

Work will also occur to improve access to allergy diagnostics and new allergy therapies, gathering evidence to support the continuing telehealth for allergy specialists and MBS items for food and drug challenges (testing), and expanding the youth project for young people with severe allergies to provide age-appropriate information, mentoring, and youth camps.

Why is this important?

Australia has been labelled the 'allergy capital of the world' due to the high, and still climbing, prevalence of allergic disease. The National Health Survey 2017–18 estimates -

- hay fever and allergic rhinitis affects 4.6 million Australians or around 19.3% of the population and chronic sinusitis affects a further two million people, or 8.4% of the population, and
- drug allergies are reported by 4.7% of the population.
- Food allergies affect about 10% of infants, 4-8% of children and about 2% of adults in Australia and New Zealand, according to the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy.

Anaphylaxis is a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction, which can lead to a sudden drop in blood pressure, narrowing of the airways which can block breathing, and shock.

Establishing a NAC and a NACE improves health care and support to better prevent allergies by research and better understanding of the causes and risk factors for allergies and anaphylaxis.

It will also contribute to efforts to reduce and prevent deaths, acute illness and hospitalisation through better diagnosis and management of allergic diseases.

This investment also supports the Commonwealth-specific *Recommendations 1, 2, 5, 8, 19 and 21* of the report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport into Allergies and Anaphylaxis in 2019.

Who will benefit?

Australian allergy sufferers and their families, along with health practitioners, teachers, childcare workers and food service providers will all benefit from improved understanding of allergy and allergic diseases.

Improving access to preventive measures, diagnostics, and treatment will also benefit millions of Australians who suffer from allergic reactions to a range of environmental, food, drug and other factors.

All Australians, not just those who experience allergies and allergic diseases or are at risk of them, will benefit from activities aimed at preventing the development of allergies.

How much will this cost?

The Australian Government is investing \$26.9 million over four years, 2022–23 to 2025–26.