

Alliance ENT & Hearing Center

Anthony A. Rieder, MD

201 N. Mayfair Rd. Suite #515

Phone: 414-727-0910, Fax: 414-727-0920, www.AllianceENT.com

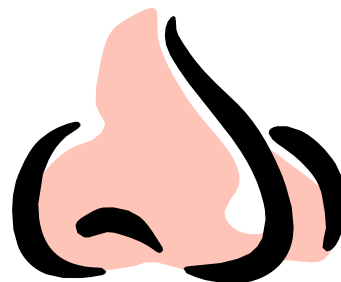
Taste and Smell Go Together

The senses of taste and smell are intimately linked to one another. Often the loss of one will result in the loss of the other.

For many people the problem may be a minor annoyance because they are saddened from the loss of the scent of a rose or a favorite cooking aroma. But for others, the loss of taste and smell can actually be quite a serious matter.

The inability to smell a gas leak, a smoldering fire or other noxious odors like spoiled food can be very dangerous.

Taste and smell disorders are common. It is estimated that more than two million Americans have a smell and taste disorder. Because of this problem, approximately 200,000 people visit a physician each year.



What Causes Loss of Smell?

The most common causes for loss of sense of taste and smell are the result of a nasal obstruction, such as the common cold, breathing allergies and nasal congestion from irritants like cigarette smoke and pollutants.

Nasal polyps, small non-cancerous growths in the nose and sinuses, can block the ability for aromas to reach the nerves high up in the nose which allow a sense of smell.

Previous surgery or a blow to the head can upset your sense of smell because the nerves of smell may be damaged or blocked by scar tissue.

Occupational exposure to chemicals may also lessen the sense of smell and certain medications can also affect the sense of smell.

Also, as we get older, like vision and hearing, the sense of smell becomes less accurate.

In rare instances, benign nonmalignant tumors grow on the nerves of smell and should be identified and removed.

How is loss of sense of smell evaluated?

A nasal examination with a nasal telescope (also called an endoscope), which illuminates and magnifies the areas of the nose where problems can occur, often will indicate the problem and direct your physician to select an appropriate treatment.

An X-RAY, usually CAT scan, is needed to look at the sinuses and noses and areas of the nerves for smell. This should be done by an expert in nose and sinus problems.

Taste Loss

While most people who experience a loss of their sense of smell may only be aware of the sensory loss, many will also notice loss or change in taste, since much of taste is smell.



Decrease Sense of Smell

For some people, it is not an actual loss, but rather an alteration in some smells or taste. Other people become aware of odors which are actually not really present. These phantom smells can be very annoying.

What can I do?

- ✓ Wait it out. If you have had a cold with a stuffy nose, chances are in a few days you will see your sense of smell return.
- ✓ Sweat it out. If your nose is stuffed up from a cold, mild exercise or a hot shower may “open it up.”
- ✓ Stop Smoking. Smoking causes long-term damage to the sense of smell. If you quit smoking, you may notice some improvement.
- ✓ Check with a physician. If your sense of smell seems to have disappeared or changed, consultation with an ear, nose and throat physician is a good idea.

Can modern technology help me?

With today’s modern nasal telescopes, an expert nasal physician can visually examine the intricate sinus passages and determine very exactly the causes of a blocked nasal airway.

A sinus infection can block you sense of smell and depending on the cause of the sinus infection, a more serious condition may be present. Sometimes a short period of time on antibiotics will remedy the problem. Sometimes, an outpatient surgery procedure is necessary. Whatever the cause, no one needs to be troubled from not knowing the cause of a loss of sense of taste or smell.