

# el Periòdic News

## HEALTH

### 23% of children in Andorra suffer from respiratory

The allergist Agustín Sansosti assures that they start at an earlier age each time

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ESCALDES - ENGORDANY

The environment and the natural habitat have a lot to do with respiratory allergies and their development, especially in Andorra, a country where nature, mountains and vegetation predominate. Today, statistics state that 20% of the population suffers from some type of respiratory allergy, a figure that the allergist Agustín Sansosti says is **«growing»**. In addition, this number could be slightly higher in the case of children in the Principality, which could reach 23%. The specialist has detailed that in recent years he has noticed that allergies start at an earlier age: **«We have small children in the consultation who already have allergy symptoms and the tests come out positive»**.

Sansosti also points out that there is an environmental component that must be taken into account, since climate change, high temperatures and the greenhouse effect are causing plants to generate much more pollen, with a much higher amount, and that they extend much lon-

ger in time. In Andorra, allergies to birch, ash, hazel, grass and mugwort pollen predominate.

Pollen can be recognized as an allergenic substance for an individual's immune system, and upon contact with it, a series of immunological reactions are triggered inside the person resulting in symptoms of being unwell. These will vary according to the person and the allergen phenomenon, but the symptoms are similar to those of a long-lasting cold and always at the same times of the year, causing itching and watery eyes, mucous plugging of the nose, and a high frequency of sneezing, in addition to general tiredness and low energy.

From EL PERIÓDIC we spoke to a witness who suffers from allergies and chose to get vaccinated monthly against grass. Mireia Nogués is a young Andorran who began to have allergy symptoms during a trip to the United Kingdom: **«I had never had allergies, and one year I spent the holidays there and got very sick»**. When she returned to the Principality, the symptoms disappeared and she had no further problems, until a year later her eyes began to swell: **«I went to the doctor and they gave me an antihistamine, which did nothing and it made me very sleepy. I went back to the doctor and they ended up referring me to the allergist»**, she ex-

**«The allergist told me that he would give me a beneficial treatment [...] So far I haven't noticed anything»**

MIREIA NOGUÉS

**«We have small children in the consultation who already have allergy symptoms and the tests are positive»**

**«There are different theories that talk about the increase in allergies, such as the hygiene theory»**

AGUSTÍN SANSOSTI

plains.

Once she had the visit with the specialist, they detected an allergy to grass and some other plant. After consulting with the doctors, they studied the possibility of having a monthly vaccination against grass: **«I was vaccinated for four years, every 30 days. Every year I made a visit to the allergist, they did all the check-ups and follow-up, she prescribed the vaccines and then I went to the health center to vaccinate me»**. After a while they decided to stop the vaccinations to see how she



Test carried out on a patient from the Principality to diag-

had evolved, and although at the beginning everything was fine, during the summer Mireia fell ill again, although it was thought that it was just a cold during the spring she had been well. After a visit to the pulmonologist, they confirmed that it was an allergy and gave her a shock treatment for seven days: **«It was brutal, it totally happened to me»**.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the witness explains that it was a season in which she did not have any allergies due to wearing masks: **«It is the only year that I have not had to take any medication only once»**. Even so, the year

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nose what she is allergic to.

after Covid, she again had severe allergy attacks: «**I went back to the allergist and he told me that he would give me a performance treatment**». Mireia started treatment in January 2023 and was

vaccinated for six months, having a very good season. Then the allergist suggested another break from the vaccines to see if she had taken the antibodies and was not allergic: «**Now I'm at this po-**

**int. At the moment I haven't noticed anything at all**», she explains.

In this sense, Sansosti explains that there are different theories that talk about the increase in allergies, such as the hygiene theory. The specialist explains that this theory focuses on the quality of life that the person is having, which, depending on how it is, makes the immune system more untrained. «**The immune system, instead of being careful to protect you from germs, is mounting a series of defenses against things that are not harmful, such as pollen, plants, dust mites or animals**», says the allergist.

Following this line, Sansosti explains that there is also a lot of talk about how food can influence this casuistry: «**The quality and variability of food nowadays would affect the digestive flora and you would be generating a set of germs which could generate inflammation in the body, which would enhance the development of certain diseases such as allergies**». For this reason, work is being done to find out which diet could be modified to promote a more anti-inflammatory digestive flora.

«**I noticed a lot of improvement, I started to have zero allergies**», explains Juanita Zamora, a witness who, after suffering severe allergies, decided to try a Chinese medicine technique, which consisted precisely of a food diet: «**I didn't take any**

**dairy products, cereals or sugar**». Juanita was on this diet for eight months and during that time she stopped having symptoms: «**I stopped taking antihistamines when I started with this diet. I didn't need them, I didn't have any symptoms**», she points out. Juanita stopped this diet a few months ago, as her work does not allow her to follow it completely: «**Now I have stopped this diet for time reasons, and I do notice that my eyes are starting to itch**».

Even so, and in advance, the allergist has recommended a whole series of tips for those who suffer from allergies: «You must try to eat as healthy as possible,

**«I stopped taking antihistamines when I started with this diet. I didn't need them»**

JUANITA ZAMORA

even though the pace of life nowadays it is so complicated that sometimes it is difficult to have a healthy diet". And according to Sansosti, the current increase in respiratory allergies will be an issue that will continue to rise in the coming years: «If we take current data into account, it is estimated that by 2050, 50% of the population will have some type of allergy.»●

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