



# Loss of Smell

## Causes:

- ✓ Diseases of the nervous system such as multiple sclerosis
- ✓ Exposure to airborne chemicals
- ✓ Head injuries from falls, car accidents, etc
- ✓ Nasal obstructions such as polyps
- ✓ Seasonal allergies
- ✓ Side effects from certain medications
- ✓ Swollen sinuses or nasal passages
- ✓ The common cold causing a loss of the sense of smell
- ✓ Thyroid abnormalities
- ✓ Tumors
- ✓ Smoking
- ✓ Vitamin deficiencies

## What Can Be Done

1. Talk to doctor to determine the reason for your loss of smell.
2. Simple daily life actions: If loss of smell is due to
  - a. **allergies:** avoid ragweed, pollens and source of allergies
  - b. **the common cold:** wash hands regularly
  - c. **exposure to insecticides or solvents:** avoid contact with these substances
  - d. **medication side effects:** talk to doctor or pharmacist about alternatives
  - e. **smoking:** quit!
  - f. **vitamin deficiency:** consume the vitamins you need
3. Health conditions: If loss of smell is due to
  - a. **thyroid abnormalities, tumors, swollen nasal passages:** get medical treatment
  - b. **polyps:** consider surgery to remove polyps to restore airflow through the nasal passages
  - c. **seasonal allergies:** consider using anti- allergy medications, topical or oral steroids work in some situations (ask your health care professional)

4. Daily life choices: **Prevention works!**

- a. wear a seat belt when driving to reduce accident risks
- b. wear helmets when riding a bicycle or cycling to reduce possibility of head  
don't smoke
- c. wash your hands regularly to reduce contact with germs

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/problemswithsmell/causesandprevention/01.html>

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/problemswithsmell/treatmentandresearch/01.html>