

OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Robert Grace, DC & Jared Wiskind, DC

Natural Relief from Seasonal Allergies

The change of season brings with it new weather, new scenery, and for many people, seasonal allergies. Also called “hay fever”, this allergic reaction may be triggered by pollen from trees, weeds, grasses or a combination of plants.

Ten to 20 percent of people suffer from allergies, with a total healthcare cost of up to 7 billion dollars. If seasonal allergies have you sniffing, sneezing and otherwise suffering, your doctor at Duluth MultiCare offers some natural and safe methods proven to help.



What Causes Allergies?

Seasonal allergies are a form of allergic *rhinitis*, or inflammation of the nose. This occurs when the immune system reacts defensively to harmless substances — like pollen, mold and pet dander — by releasing a flood of histamine, a neurotransmitter that triggers inflammation.

Inflammation is a normal, healthy response to pathogens, which helps the body heal itself. Like any allergy, hay fever is an immunity disorder in which the body overreacts to a benign trigger, such as pollen.

Risk factors for allergic rhinitis include a family history of allergy, having other allergies, such as food allergies or eczema, exposure to second-hand cigarette smoke, a poor diet, lack of exercise, fatigue and stress.

Researchers also speculate that an aggressive childhood vaccination schedule may prompt an autoimmune response, which might be associated with the rise in cases of allergic rhinitis.

Chiropractic’s Holistic View of Allergy Prevention

Chiropractors, like your doctor at Duluth MultiCare, view all aspects of wellness — including a healthy immune system — as directly connected to the nervous system. The spinal cord is at the center of the nervous system, and it can be hindered by **vertebral subluxations**. These areas of dysfunction in the spine result from misaligned vertebrae (spinal bones).

Doctors of chiropractic, like your doctor at Duluth MultiCare, correct vertebral subluxations with gentle maneuvers called **chiropractic adjustments**. Correcting vertebral subluxations can calm the inflammation of allergies caused by an over-excited nervous system (*J Spinal Manip* 1993;9:2-11).

The Risks of Allergy Medication

Many people attempt to counteract the inflammatory action of histamines with antihistamines, the largest class of drugs on the market. They function by blocking histamine receptors in certain cells.

Your doctor at Duluth MultiCare is concerned about the common use of antihistamines because they carry certain risks. Some cross the blood-brain barrier and have strong sedative effects, including drowsiness, dizziness, poor coordination, blurred vision and

tremors.

Other antihistamines can cause dangerous drug interactions. Research indicates that the discomfort of allergic rhinitis already hinders learning, decision-making speed and psychomotor speed — why take a chance of making the situation worse by adding drugs into the mix?

Keep It Clean With Nasal Irrigation

Nasal irrigation is a safe and highly effective method of allergy control. Used for centuries in some cultures and now popular in the West as well, nasal irrigation involves flushing the nose and sinuses with saline solution, either from cupped hands, a syringe or a neti pot. The process rinses dried mucus and foreign matter like pollen from the nasal and sinus cavities.

In a clinical trial at the University of Wisconsin, patients who used nasal irrigation daily for six months had fewer sinonasal symptoms and used less medication than those in a control group (*J Fam Pract* 2002;51:1049-55).



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A research review found nasal irrigation safe and effective for adults and children against sinonasal conditions such as allergies, sinus infection and asthma (*Can Fam Physician* 2003;49:68-173).

Fight Allergies with Nutrition

Certain nutrients also fight the inflammation response that triggers allergies. Vitamin C, for instance, suppresses histamine production by white blood cells. Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant found in many of the fruits and vegetables the doctor recommends consuming for optimal health. The nutrient is especially plentiful in rose hips, acerola, red peppers, guava, kiwifruit and broccoli.

Researchers tested a vitamin C nasal spray on patients suffering from allergic rhinitis. After two weeks of daily treatment, 74 percent experienced significant relief of inflammation and nasal secretions (*Ear Nose Throat J* 1991;70:54-55).

Carotenoids, including beta-carotene, are also abundant in several plant sources. Research shows that these nutrients are associated with lower levels of inflammation (*Clin Chim Acta* 2010;411:1330-4).

Carotenoid-rich foods include apricots, carrots, pumpkin, sweet potato, spinach, kale, butternut squash and collard greens.

Omega-3 fatty acids are among the “essential” fatty acids that the body cannot synthesize on its own — and therefore must obtain through diet. One investigation correlated low incidence of allergic rhinitis with high levels of omega-3s in the red blood cells of study subjects.

Other studies also show that omega-3s counter the specific type of inflammation associated with allergies (*Clin Exp Immunol* 2010;160:411-9).

To get a healthy dose of this nutritional powerhouse, consume fish and fish oil (taking care to avoid those with high mercury levels), flaxseed and walnuts.

Supplements to Consider

Several plant-based remedies also show promise in reducing the symptoms of seasonal allergies. For instance, an analysis of nettle extract uncovered several mechanisms by which it suppresses allergic rhinitis (*Phytother Res* 2009;23:920-6).

Bromelian, an enzyme extracted from pineapples, is available as a supplement and has been shown to reduce allergic rhinitis (*Acta Otolaryngol* 2006;126:746-51).

Researchers have also found that the flavonoid quercetin, which naturally occurs in tea, impedes histamine release in allergy sufferers (*J Allergy Clin Immunol* 1995;96:528-36).

Finally, spirulina, an algae that is a popular health supplement, reduces nasal discharge, itching, sneezing and congestion (*Eur Arch Otorhinolaryngol* 2008;265:1219-23).

Biminne is a Chinese herbal formula used to treat allergic rhinitis. In a recent study of 58 people with year-round allergic rhinitis, biminne was found to effectively relieve at least some symptoms in most of the participants (*Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol* 2002;88:478-87).

Tinospora Cordifolia (Guduchi) is a medicinal herb popular in India. In one study, researchers gave 75 allergic rhinitis patients either tinospora cordifolia (TC) extract or placebo for eight weeks. The researchers concluded: “The difference between TC and placebo groups was highly significant...TC significantly decreased all symptoms of allergic rhinitis.” (*J Ethnopharmacol* 2005;96:445-9.)

The Power of Probiotics

“Probiotic” literally means “for life” and encompasses a variety of microorganisms that live in and confer health benefits on a host.

You may be most familiar with probiotic supplements in the context of digestive health. However, since a large portion of the immune system is in the

gut, what protects the digestive system protects the entire body, including the nose and sinuses.

One investigation comparing intestinal flora of allergic and nonallergic children shows two common probiotic microbes, Bifidobacteria and Lactobacilli, exist in much higher levels in nonallergic children (*Clin Exp Immunol* 2010;160:295-304).

Other studies recently reviewed show the potential of probiotics to manage seasonal allergies and other allergic conditions (*J Nutr* 2010;140:713S-21S). Probiotics are available in yogurt and other lacto-fermented foods as well as in capsule form.

Stress Reduction

Stress and fatigue may exacerbate allergies. That’s why it is key for allergy sufferers to keep emotional stress in check. Winning stress-reduction strategies include daily aerobic exercise, meditation, prayer, tai chi and yoga. Adequate sleep is also essential.

Exercise

Regular exercise is integral to boosting the immune response and warding off allergies. Talk to the doctor about what type of exercises are right for you.

Sniff Out Sniffles With Chiropractic

Before beginning any supplementation program, or any natural approach to allergy prevention, it is vital that you consult with a doctor of chiropractic. Don’t delay. Call our office today to schedule an appointment!

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