

It's Nothing to Sneeze at!

Find some relief by treating seasonal allergies naturally.

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LIVING IN THE BEAUTY OF NATURE is what makes life in Malibu so exquisite. But if you're one of the more than thirty-five million Americans who suffer from seasonal allergies, your vision of paradise may be replaced by a nightmare of high pollen counts, eye drops and tissues when the weather turns warm and windy.

Seasonal allergies are a result of your body's reaction to allergens (particles your body considers foreign) and are an indication that your immune system is in defense mode. Common allergens include pollen from trees, grasses and weeds, dust, dust mites, mold spores, airborne particles, pet dander and environmental chemicals.

Antihistamines, decongestants and other allergy medications can be effective treatments; however, they often have unwanted side effects and may provide only partial or minimal relief.

Natural remedies for allergies address the root of the problem and can be extremely effective for alleviating symptoms. For optimal results, use all natural remedies simultaneously.

Turn on your HEPA filter. Many allergy sufferers are not only allergic to allergens found outdoors but also those found in the home. HEPA filters work by trapping extremely small allergy-causing particles. The best room for your HEPA filter is the one you spend the most time in—usually the bedroom.

Sinus/nasal rinse (neti pot). Originally an Ayurvedic method for longevity and health maintenance, sinus/nasal rinsing is a widely used, effective method for clearing and decongesting nasal and sinus passages. Using a small teapot-shaped container, a saline solution flushes out mucus and irritants from the sinuses, improving the flow of air through the nose and reducing nasal swelling. Use daily and be sure to use filtered, not tap, water.

Investigate food sensitivities and food allergies. Food troubles are commonly connected to seasonal allergies and negatively impact the immune system in different ways. It is especially worthwhile for those with digestive issues like bloating, distension, gas, constipation and diarrhea to closely examine this possibility. Many foods can cause the same reactions as airborne pollens. It's important to note that what you

don't eat can be just as important as what you do eat.

Eliminate dairy from your diet. Dairy contains arachidonic acids, which cause the increased production of phlegm and mucus. Dairy also contains large amounts of casein, a protein that can weaken the immune system when consumed in high doses. Try switching to dairy-free options like hemp or almond milk, almond or coconut yogurt and dairy-free cheese. Goat dairy or unpasteurized dairy can also be less aggravating of symptoms.

Stress less. Due to its physiological impact on the body, stress can be a significant contributing factor to seasonal allergies. Consider whether stress affects your allergies. If it does, seek methods to reduce it, as it is likely that stress may be impacting other health issues as well. Explore tools for stress management such as daily meditation, relaxation techniques, yoga and acupuncture.

Take probiotics. Studies have found that probiotics can offer relief for those with allergy symptoms. In a study using the probiotic strain bifidobacterium lactis, individuals had lower blood allergy markers and also reported less nasal congestion after five-to-eight weeks of probiotic use. For recommended dosages, consult your health care provider.

Soak up the vitamin D. Although the body naturally makes vitamin D through sun exposure, seventy-to-eighty percent of Americans are still low in vitamin D due to the use of sunscreen, which blocks the skin's ability to make it. This vitamin plays a crucial role in the immune system and low levels can contribute to allergies. Take a therapeutic supplement in the levels of 50-70 ng/mL per day.

Quercetin. This is a natural antihistamine. Foods high in quercetin include: apples, berries, citrus fruits, red grapes, broccoli, cayenne pepper, garlic, onions and parsley. In addition to eating high quercetin-content foods, allergy sufferers should begin taking a quercetin supplement of 500-1,000 mg at least one month before allergy season begins.

Increase your omega-3s. High quality, animal-based omega-3s, known as DHA and EPA, are powerful anti-inflammatories. Research has found that people who have diets rich in omega-3 fatty acids suffer from fewer allergy symptoms. The best dietary sources of omega-3s include grass fed, hormone-free meat and



eggs. You may also supplement with krill or fish oils.

Eat local raw honey. Consuming honey is like gradually vaccinating the body against pollen allergens. Since local honey contains the same pollen spores that cause allergies, eating it in small amounts desensitizes the immune system to those same allergens. A favorite Malibu local raw honey can be found at Vital Zuman Organic Farm. Consume at least one teaspoon per day for one month prior to and during allergy season.

Acupuncture. This five-thousand-year-old remedy helps strengthen healthy immune response by stimulating lymph movement. It also works to activate the parasympathetic nervous system in order to regulate high-stress levels that may be exacerbating allergies. ■

Natural allergy recommendations are for adults only. Recommendations for children may vary. As with starting any new health care regimen, consult your primary health care provider first.