

## **ALLERGIES**

Allergies are due to an over-active immune response to substances that actually pose no threat to the body. Seasonal allergies, the most common allergic condition, involve an allergic reaction of the nasal passages and airways to air-borne pollens. If allergies develop in the spring, they're usually related to tree pollens and if they develop in the summer, they're usually related to grass and weed pollens. If allergy symptoms persist year-round they're related to exposure to other allergens.

### **What dietary factors are important in treating allergies?**

People with allergies have over-reactive immune systems that often react to foods in addition to pollens. An important step in dealing with allergies is to reduce the "allergic threshold" by eliminating any foods that are causing low-grade allergic reactions. As well, many studies show that food allergies play an important role in asthma and eczema. An adverse reaction to a food may be immediate or delayed, so it is therefore often difficult to pinpoint which foods are contributing to allergy symptoms. People suffering with allergies often benefit from special low-allergen diets or from food allergy testing.

### **What other natural treatments help relieve allergies?**

Regular rinsing of the nasal passages with salt-water is very helpful in washing away allergens and reducing congestion. This can be done with a Neti pot, nasal syringe or squeeze bottle designed for nasal rinsing.

Lack of adequate sleep often worsens allergy symptoms, therefore it is advised to get at least 8 hours of rest. Using air purifiers at home, particularly in the bedroom for sleeping, can help reduce air-borne allergens.

Acupuncture treatments can help open the nasal passages, relieve sinus congestion and reduce airway inflammation.

There are also numerous natural medicines that are helpful in safely treating allergies. Natural medicines aim to reduce inflammation caused by allergic reactions and promote a more balanced immune response that is less reactive to allergens.

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