

May/June 2013

## NATURAL REMEDIES FOR SEASONAL ALLERGIES

Since this is the beginning of allergy season we have devoted this issue to ways to deal with this problem naturally.

Is there anything we can do besides limp along on meds while yearning for the temporary relief that rain or winter might afford? Fortunately some positive alternatives are available, that can both alleviate and moderate symptoms.

## WHAT ARE SEASONAL ALLERGIES?

An allergy could be best described as an abnormal reaction by a person's immune system to a normally harmless substance. People with allergies tend to have elevated levels of the class of antibodies known as IgE. When these antibodies react with pollen or mold in a sensitive person, they activate special white blood cells called mast cells and basophiles. These white blood cells release inflammatory chemicals such as histamine leukotrienes, which trigger allergic symptoms.

An inflammatory process is stimulated in the mucosal membranes lining the nasal cavities and sinuses. Then symptoms such as sneezing, runny, stuffy, or itchy nose, watery itchy eyes, dry cough, fatigue, irritability, hives, or asthma can develop.

Seasonal allergies can also cause sinusitis, or inflammation of the sinuses. The signs and symptoms of sinusitis include headache, toothache, earache, and

facial pain or tenderness over the four areas where the paranasal sinuses are located.

Allergic symptoms occurring during the spring are usually related to tree pollens. Grass pollen is a common cause during the summer, and ragweed, sagebrush, and tumbleweed are frequent triggers during autumn. If symptoms persist year-round, food

allergies, mold, dust mites, or pet dander may be responsible for the allergy.

*So what can allergy sufferers do?*

## CLEAN AIR AND EXERCISE

Because morning exercise is especially helpful in building the adrenal cortices that secrete cortisol, a natural anti-inflammatory hormone, try to do at least 20 minutes of exercise every morning. Because the pollen count is generally higher between 5 to 10 a.m., you may need to exercise indoors during

that time. It may also be helpful to avoid much outdoor activity on days when the pollen count is especially high or it is windy since wind spreads pollen.

Using HEPA air filters can also improve air quality by removing 99.98% or greater percent of airborne particles sized 0.3 micrometers (um) in diameter. This size of particle is the most difficult to filter and is thus considered the most penetrating particle size (MPPS). The filters filter particles that are larger or smaller with even higher efficiency. Be sure to keep ducts and air-conditioner filters clean. Dirty filters



can cause trouble. If vacuuming, use only those models containing clean air filters.

## THE DIET THAT HELPS ALLERGIES



Eat at least 2 servings of omega-3 rich foods daily because deficiency of this special fatty acid increases risk of allergies. Walnuts, chia seeds, spinach, soybeans, or ground flaxseed are good vegetarian sources of essential anti-inflammatory alpha linolenic acid. Although olive oil is not an omega-3 fat, it also exerts anti-inflammatory effect and can be used in moderation with good results.

Reduce any consumption of omega-6 fats (including corn, safflower, sunflower, or peanut oils). Excessive use of these fats, as opposed to omega-3 ones, tends to increase inflammation in the body.

Seriously limit sugar; it shifts body chemistry toward inflammation.

## VITAMIN D

Vitamin D is an important immune-regulator and a natural anti-inflammatory agent. Be sure you are not deficient in this essential vitamin. Since vitamin D insufficiency is common in North America and Western Europe, if you have allergies, have your vitamin D level checked. It is a simple blood test.

## HERBAL REMEDIES

- Rosemary, sage, and basil: The rosmarinic acid in each of these common herbs reduces inflammation in the sinuses and lungs. Unlike antihistamines, rosmarinic acid suppresses pro-inflammatory responses and decreases the activation of immuno-responder cells that promote swelling and other symptoms of allergy induced inflammation. However, pregnant or lactating women should not use medicinal amounts of rosemary or sage. If you are taking any medications, be sure to check with your pharmacist before using

herbs in medicinal amounts so as to avoid any potential adverse drug interactions.

## WATER CURES

Contrast (hot and cold) showers are also a helpful therapy for allergy symptoms, including sinus congestion. Try focusing the water spray on the face; the alternating hot and cold to this area will improve blood flow to the sinuses. The basic practice is approximately 3 minutes of hot followed by 30 seconds to 1 minute of cold. Repeat the sequence three times. Dry off vigorously, then rest warmly in a draft-free area for at least 20 minutes.

## NASAL IRRIGATION

Irrigating your nasal passages with a saline solution can be helpful for seasonal allergies and many types of sinusitis.

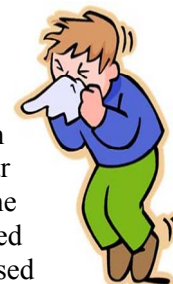
- To make your own saline, combine:
- ½ teaspoon non iodized salt
- A pinch of baking soda
- 1 cup of warm water (filtered or previously-boiled)

Combine the ingredients in a clean container. Draw solution up into a nasal-bulb syringe or pour it into an irrigation pitcher, such as a neti pot. If using the neti pot, tilt your head sideways and pour into one nostril, allowing solution to flow out the other nostril. You may notice that mucus comes out of the nose with the fluid. Continue until fluid comes out clear or until you have used half of the solution. Repeat the full process for the other nostril.

Saline irrigation may need to be performed on a daily (or even several time per day) basis for people with severe symptoms until they improve. Individuals with an acute sinus infection, should avoid this procedure, because it may encourage the spread of harmful bacteria.

## NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT

Seasonal and other common allergies can contribute to chronic coughing, ear infections, inflammation of the esophagus, deficient sleep, intensified asthma symptoms, and possible increased risk for stroke. If these suggestions and natural



remedies do not provide significant relief, we would recommend seeing an allergist or ENT (ear, nose, and throat) specialist. As you can do all you can, look forward to that time when no one will ever again say, “ I am sick,” where “nothing shall hurt or destroy” in that wonderful world made new!

*This article is adapted from the e-book, Keys to Optimal Health and Happiness, by Elizabeth J. Hall and is used by permission of The College of Health Evangelism in Wildwood, GA. Go to <http://newstartclub.com/resources/detail/natural-remedies-for-seasonal-allergies> for the complete article.*

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## EXERCISE BOOSTS BRAIN POWER

- Exercise increases cerebral blood flow, increases neurotransmitter availability and efficiency, and affects brain structure.
- Small increases in aerobic fitness improve mental fitness, particularly executive control functions of the brain, which have to do with planning, coordinating, and filtering out distracting information.
- Animal and human studies show that repeated physical activity triggers chemical

changes in the brain that enhance learning and memory.

- Children learn better when the brain is stimulated by exercising.
- People over age 60 who walk rapidly for 45 minutes 3 times a week can significantly improve mental processing abilities that would normally decline with age.

## EXERCISE HELPS YOU SLEEP

- Exercise can help alleviate sleep problems in older adults.
- Exercise can be effective in improving reported sleep quality, depression, strength, and quality of life.
- Treating chronic fatigue with appropriate exercise can improve sleep and mood.
- Exercising in the evening does not disturb sleep.



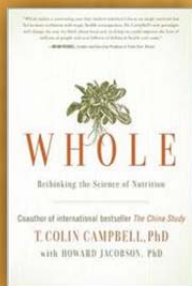
What’s the best exercise for you? It is the exercise you will do! Walking, riding a bike, joining an exercise club or gym, taking up golfing—the choices are almost limitless and can be adapted to country or city dwellers, rich or poor, the athletic or the out-of-shape.

One thing is sure—exercise is good for the brain, as well as the body—and daily doses will boost your mood, improve your memory, and build your brain more than any single factor. Remember: motion balances emotion, so when you’re moody—get moving—for better health!

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## Book Recommendation



What happens when you eat an apple? The answer is vastly more complex than you imagine. Every apple contains thousands of antioxidants whose names, beyond a few like vitamin C, are unfamiliar to us, and each of these powerful chemicals has the potential to play an important role in supporting our health.

Nutritional science is at the cusp of a revolution. The traditional “gold standard” of nutrition research has been to study one chemical at a time in an attempt to determine its particular impact on the human body. These sorts of studies are helpful to food companies trying to prove there is a chemical in milk or pre-packaged dinners that is “good” for us, but they provide little insight into the complexity of what actually happens in our bodies or how those chemicals contribute to our health.

In *The China Study*, T. Colin Campbell (alongside his son, Thomas M. Campbell) revolutionized the way we think about our food with the evidence that a whole food, plant-based diet is the healthiest way to eat. Now, in ***Whole***, he explains the science behind that evidence, the ways our current scientific paradigm ignores the fascinating complexity of the human body, and why, if we have such overwhelming evidence that everything we think we know about nutrition is wrong, our eating habits haven’t changed.

*Whole* is an eye-opening, journey through cutting-edge thinking on nutrition, a scientific tour de force with powerful implications for our health and for our world.

## Chef's Corner

### Strawberry Honey Sorbet



This is such an easy and classic strawberry recipe and made so much better if you buy the strawberries in-season.

#### Ingredients

- 1 pint strawberries, hulled and quartered
- 1/4 cup honey or agave nectar
- 1 lemon, juiced

#### Instructions

1. Place the strawberries in a blender and puree until very smooth. Push the puree through a fine mesh sieve to remove some of the seeds. Whisk in the honey and lemon juice. Cover and chill the mixture.
2. Once the strawberry mixture is completely chilled, pour into the ice cream maker and freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions. Return the sorbet to the freezer for a couple more hours to continue firming up.

Serves: 2-4 - **Diabetic Friendly**