

Beat Hay Fever

Itchy and streaming eyes? Runny nose? Constant sneezing? It's the hay fever season. Follow our top tips to enjoy a sneeze-free summer!

Avoid pollen peaks

Pollen counts tend to peak at dawn and dusk. Consequently, you tend to suffer the most at these times. So schedule your outdoor activities, especially exercise, around these peak pollen times for easier breathing.

Go out prepared

Whenever you go outside, wear sunglasses, the wrap-around type, to keep pollen out of your eyes. Use a nasal barrier such as a hay fever balm or Vaseline to prevent pollen from getting inside the nose. Take a natural antihistamine equivalent as it is non-drowsy. Keep your car windows shut whilst driving and use the air-conditioner.

Minimise pollen exposure indoors

Pollen can enter the house through open windows, on clothes or hair. You can prevent this by keeping the windows closed, taking your clothes off as soon as you come in and putting them into the washing machine. Then

head straight for the shower and wash your hair, face and body to remove any traces of pollen.

Ban allergy triggers at home

Clean your home of dust mites and moulds as both act as potent allergens and can aggravate your symptoms. Use natural cleaning products to minimise your exposure to chemicals. Keep your home dust free and have your mattresses and bedding cleaned regularly. Ensure your bathroom is mould-free. Mould produces spores that are spread through the air and can cause allergies throughout the year.

Eliminate food irritants

Dairy products increase mucus production and aggravate nasal congestion. Wheat and gluten products are clogging and tend to make hay fever symptoms worse. Use non-dairy and gluten-free alternatives. Red meat can exacerbate inflammation, so opt for fish instead. Skip alcohol as it adds to nasal congestion, strains the liver and thus slows down the removal of toxins.

People with ragweed allergies can also experience a reaction or symptom aggravation when eating watermelons, cantaloupe and honeydew melons, cucumbers and courgettes. Those with birch-tree pollen allergy can react to cherries, pears, peaches, carrots, tomatoes and potatoes.

Eat allergy busting foods

Eat foods rich in vitamin C and quercetin, natural antihistamines, i.e. apples, onions, berries, red grapes and citrus fruits. Make red onion soup, eat apples (unpeeled), drink lemon juice and warm water. Include some oily fish, pumpkin seeds and almonds to reduce inflammation. Use anti-inflammatory spices, turmeric, ginger and garlic.

Drink fenugreek seed tea daily to prevent irritation and congestion of the nasal passages



and sinuses. Alternatively, drink fresh nettle juice for its natural antihistamine effect and water to help flush out the system of toxins.

Chamomile or nettle tea can also help soothe the symptoms due to their anti-inflammatory properties. Used cold teabags can serve as an eye compress to reduce redness, puffiness and itchiness. Alternatively, use rose water.

Boost the immune system

Boosting the immune system will increase the body's resistance and significantly reduce your symptoms and suffering. Increase your intake of vitamin C, bioflavonoids, carotenoids, omega-3 fats, zinc and probiotics.

Try nasal irrigation

Use a neti pot to pour warm saline solution into each nostril twice daily. Seawater is good

too, especially for sinuses. Avoid the swimming pool water, as chlorine aggravates hay fever symptoms.

Keep nasal sprays and eye drops handy

They can clear blocked breathing passages, stop a runny nose and streaming eyes. I have found Weleda Rhinodoron Nasal Spray (www.weleda.com) and Allerclear Eyebright Eye Drops (www.allerclear.co.uk) to be highly soothing and effective at keeping sneezing and itchy, watery eyes at bay!

Use top supplements

Apiar Allermin drops contain the bee pollen which acts as an antidote to the airborne pollen and greatly reduces the reaction (www.cressuk.com). BioCare Bio-Flavone 1000 is an excellent natural antihistamine complex.

Boost your gut flora with BioCare Bio-Acidophilus Forte Plus (www.biocare.co.uk). For best results, include these supplements before your symptoms develop.

Note: Always consult a doctor before changing your diet and taking any supplements. □



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