

Hayfever is a common seasonal allergy that causes discomfort and disruption to over 25 per cent of adults throughout peak season from May to September. Also known as allergic rhinitis, hayfever is caused by an allergy to seasonal airborne pollens, which causes an overreaction in the immune system. Sneezing, itchy eyes, running or blocked nose, wheezing and skin irritation are just some of the many associated symptoms. Learn how to combat your body against hayfever naturally with help from the experts.

9 NATURAL REMEDIES for HAYFEVER

Do you spend your summer looking distinctly unglamorous with bloodshot eyes and a streaming nose? Try these holistic hayfever busters instead

Words by Julie Penfold

1 Bromelain

"Bromelain is an enzyme found naturally in fresh pineapple that is a very effective anti-inflammatory for hayfever," says nutritionist and medical chef, Dale Pinnock. "With hayfever, the bunged-up sensation is actually due to the mucus membranes that line the airways becoming inflamed. Bromelain essentially interrupts that inflammatory response and alleviates symptoms quickly."

2 Combat stress

Stress in hayfever sufferers often causes symptoms to worsen as the body produces cortisone, known as the stress hormone, which affects the immune system. Try meditation which is deeply relaxing, kind to the nervous system, and helps to lower stress.

3 Quercetin

Quercetin is a natural antihistamine found in a number of food sources including apples, green and black tea and red onion and garlic (the last two must be eaten raw for maximum effect). Garlic has the added boost of its active ingredient allicin, which is effective in easing of hayfever and other allergies.



4 Nettle

"Nettle is great for alleviating the symptoms of allergic rhinitis and it can be digested in a number of ways," says naturopath and herbalist, Susse Wedel. "You can go out and pick it up yourself and wash, steam and eat it like spinach or create a nettle soup."

An alternative to eating nettles is to drink nettle tea which helps to quickly reduce symptoms. Nettle also contains iron and calcium so it is a great all-round health booster."

5 Flower power

Elderflower and chamomile share a number of anti-allergic, properties to reduce irritation. Elderflower is anti-catarhal which helps to dry mucus from inflamed nasal passages. Chamomile is renowned for calming anxiety and aiding sleep. For quick relief from itchy eyes, place chilled chamomile teabags onto the eyes, to reduce soreness and itching.

6 Herbs can help

For sufferers of itchy, streaming eyes, Susse recommends eyebright or bilberry as they both work to strengthen the blood vessels of the eyes and reduce eye itchiness. Goldenseal can help to minimise irritation. Feverfew is most commonly used for headaches and migraines, yet its anti-allergic effects can also offer relief to stuffy noses.

"Acupuncture combats allergies by stimulating the body's own healing response"

7 Reishi mushroom

Though it sounds edible, the reishi mushroom is strictly-supplement only due to its origins from hard tree fungus. Dale says: "Reishi mushroom is the number one natural supplement for controlling hayfever. It contains a compound that performs a huge stimulation of the immune system, activating non-specific immunity and dampening down allergic responses."

8 Acupuncture

Acupuncture has been used in Chinese medicine to alleviate the symptoms of allergic reactions for over 2,500 years. Fine needles are carefully inserted into the energy channels of the body which run underneath skin. This stimulates the body's own healing response and helps to restore its natural balance.

Acupuncturist Daniel Maxwell

says: "Acupuncture is great for the symptoms of hayfever and all kinds of allergic conditions due to the significant effect it has on modulating the immune system."

9 Exercise

Regular exercise also helps to strengthen the immune system and to reduce inflammation and sensitivity to hayfever triggers. Try yoga, which is a soothing form of exercise that is excellent for relaxing the nervous system and calming heightened allergic responses. Swimming also helps by strengthening and relaxing the body but remember to wear goggles in the pool.



CASE STUDY

"I was allergic to my hayfever medication"

Dawn Hosking, age 40, found a natural remedy for hayfever after suffering an intolerance to her medication.

"My hayfever symptoms started about five years ago and included watery, itchy and dry eyes, sneezing, itchy nasal passages, sinus pain, gum inflammation, jaw pain, tiredness and an itchy throat. I initially suffered from an intolerance to my

synthetic medication, which made matters worse. Then I discovered Haymax, which is natural, drug-free and organic. I can now drive the car and have the windows open, with much less sneezing, watery and red eyes, tiredness and sinus pain, which is great. I can also enjoy being out in my garden without symptoms, and there's a field at the rear too! Needless to say I am delighted!

STOP THE SNIFFLES

Try these holistic remedies to combat hayfever this summer

■ Sterimar Isotonic Nasal Hygiene Sea Water Micro-Diffusion Spray, £6.49, 100% natural pollutant-free sea water



■ The Bicom bioresonance machine picks up the frequency patterns of pollen in the water from your area then reverses them via electrodes to desensitise your body. Costs £95 at 1 Harley St, £90 in Croydon. Call 0800 247 1997 or go to healthvibes.co.uk

■ New Care Allergy Defence, £6.99, previously known as Nasaleze, is a unique powder spray



■ HayMax, £6.95, is an all-natural organic drug-free pollen barrier balm



■ Bio-Pycnogenol, £11.99 (30 tabs), all-natural antihistamine made from French pine tree bark

