

ALLERGIES

Symptoms and Allergy Relief

By The American Institute of Health Care Professionals, Inc.



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Introduction

There are many types of allergies and you may be a person that has to deal with living with an allergy.

Do you know what type of allergy you suffer from? In our report we hope to enlighten you on the different types, symptoms and treatments.

Common Types of Allergies

An allergy or hypersensitivity reaction is the term used to describe a condition wherein the immune system elicits an immune response when in contact with a certain type of substance.

In this condition there is a problem with the white blood cells that are responsible for this immune response.

This is called "blind" white blood cells. These "blind" white blood cells cause a reaction when in contact with a trigger substance that is relatively inert and should not trigger any immune response.

Hypersensitivity reactions are divided into 4 common categories.

1. The first type or the immediate hypersensitivity reaction is commonly known as the allergy. It may be the root cause of, and predisposition to diseases and disorders like asthma and anaphylaxis. An allergy is mainly caused by IgE and IgG that are responsible for releasing histamines which result in symptoms of allergies.
2. The second type or the 'cytotoxic', antibody-dependent immune response is caused by hypersensitivity of complements IgM, and IgG.
3. The third type is called an immune complex disease caused by hypersensitivity of complements and IgG. This type of hypersensitivity is life-threatening as it affects the immune system.
4. The fourth is called the delayed-type or cell-mediated immune memory response. This is the immune response responsible for antibody production. This type of response is mainly due to T-cells, a type of white blood cell that creates a response when in contact with a substance that it had contact with before.

T-cells memorize these substances, and when they encounter them again, create antibodies against these substances. It takes time for T-cells to elicit a response thus the term delayed hypersensitivity.

There are different triggers that cause allergic reactions. The most common allergies are:

1. Seasonal Allergy - As the name suggests, it only occurs at specific times of the year. An example of this is hay fever. Hay Fever causes allergic rhinitis and is rampant during spring and fall due to the abundance of pollens and grasses in the air.
2. Asthma Allergy - An asthma allergy causes inflammation of the lungs and airways. This allergy is caused by inhalation of allergens due to odor or chemicals and triggers allergic reactions and asthma attacks.
3. Skin Allergies - Atopic dermatitis or eczema is a skin condition caused by physical contact with an allergen. This type produces rashes on the face, around the eyes, behind the knees, and elbows, itching and skin dryness.
4. Dust and Mold Allergies - A dust allergy is used to describe allergy from microscopic organisms present in dust. It causes perennial allergic rhinitis and is very common in houses and buildings. Mold allergies are from the mold spores and are also found in homes and buildings.
5. Food Allergy - This is one of the most common types of allergies and for good reason. We eat all the time! Food allergens, once eaten, can cause hives, swelling of the mouth, tongue and face, and in severe cases, anaphylaxis - a life threatening immune response. The most common food allergens are peanuts, shellfish, eggs and milk.
6. Drug Allergy - This allergy is possibly the most dangerous of all allergies as its impact is internal and can directly affect blood vessels and major organs. Many people are allergic to certain antibiotics, for example sulfur antibiotics.

Your doctor should always ask if you have an allergy to any medications before administration.

These are just a few of the common types of allergies that people suffer from. Since allergies can be life-threatening, it is worth remembering what allergens trigger any reactions so as to avoid them in the future.

Understanding Food Allergies

Food allergies are an immune response triggered by perceived threats to the body. These reactions can vary from minor irritation to anaphylaxis - a potentially life threatening condition.

Normal function of our immune system identifies and removes these potential threats to the body by creating antibodies.

In some cases however this immune response gets confused and certain foods or specifically the proteins they consist of, become recognized as allergens. This can trigger an often inflammatory response of varying severity that can affect the skin, airways, sinuses or digestive system.

Why Do We Develop Food Allergies?

Little is understood about why we develop food allergies although they are known in some circumstances to be genetically carried. Some allergies may be outgrown in childhood, while others develop later in life.

Much research is currently underway to try and expand our understanding of food allergies as their occurrence along with various food sensitivities and intolerances are increasing, particularly in children.

According to the 'Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy' hospital admissions for food related anaphylaxis has doubled over the last ten years for adults and increased almost five fold for children under the age of 4.

Few treatment options exist and avoidance is the best and often only option when faced with known food allergies. In severe reactions the protein responsible

is generally obvious with symptoms appearing almost immediately, most often requiring emergency medical intervention.

Peanuts, tree nuts (such as cashews) and shellfish are the most common foods associated with such life-threatening episodes.

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Mild reactions are often harder to diagnosis as they can occur hours after the problem food was consumed. Certain symptoms especially in younger children or infants may be harder to recognize and associate with dietary activities; such as infantile colic, reflux, or failure to thrive.

Certain foods are known to have a higher incidence of triggering reactions, such as cow's milk, eggs, soy products, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, wheat, fish and shellfish.

When allergy symptoms are suspected further testing or implementation of an exclusion diet may be carried out to determine the trigger (or triggers) responsible, certain blood and skin prick tests are available to identify or indeed exclude specific allergens.

There is an increasing recognition of the triggers associated with allergies by the food provider chain as well as sufferers and their families and carers.

- Improved labeling of foods which may contain life-threatening allergy triggers is of great assistance to those at risk.
- An added bonus of such labeling is the increase in public awareness of the dangers of food allergies. This does not lessen the need for constant vigilance on the part of the allergy sufferer.

The risks associated with food allergies unfortunately cannot be treated, they can however be minimized by careful planning. In some cases antihistamines may be administered to control or relieve mild symptoms, while emergency treatment is required in the event of severe anaphylactic responses.

Individuals with known severe allergies often carry an 'epipen' or epinephrine auto-injector which can rapidly reverse the effects of anaphylaxis. Identification, exposure management strategies and education; including emergency first aid of care givers (particularly in children) are the most important issues when dealing with food allergies and their associated symptoms.

Food Allergy or Food Sensitivity

A great deal of misunderstanding surrounds the subject of food allergies and food insensitivities. Some experts believe that hidden food allergies can make people suffer from systemic inflammation which may last for up to four hours after the offending food is eaten.

A hidden food allergy may manifest in the form of mental fog, fatigue, depression and anxiety. Eliminating those common food allergens from one's diet for a certain period of time may eliminate the "stressors" and help renew a person's health.

Hidden Food Allergy

The subject of hidden food allergies remains controversial as some conventional doctors do not believe that a 'hidden food allergy' is a common condition. On the other hand, alternative doctors believe that a hidden food allergy is quite common and that many people experience this condition.

The symptoms of a food allergy may include but is not limited to: postnasal drip, sore throat, sneezing, abdominal pain, skin rashes, itchy or runny nose, itchy mouth, diarrhea, watery eyes and headache. Some life-threatening food allergy symptoms may include difficulty breathing or swallowing.

Many people experience abnormal reactions after ingesting a particular food and suspect that they are allergic to it. However, statistics show that only up to 5% of the adult population and up to 8% of the younger population has been found to be allergic to certain food groups.

Others who experience negative reactions after eating specific foods were diagnosed as having food sensitivity and not a food allergy.

What Is The Difference?

Whilst symptoms of a food allergy or food sensitivity are very similar, the body's reaction is very different. A food allergy is triggered by an individual's reaction by the immune system to a certain food.

On the other hand, food sensitivity refers to those symptoms that do not result from a reaction by a person's immune system. People suffer from food sensitivity because their bodies lack the needed enzymes to properly digest the food.

It may be difficult to determine if the observed symptoms are caused by insensitivity or allergy to a particular food. If self-monitoring is inconclusive it may be necessary to seek the assistance of a doctor or dietician.

If the symptoms are more discomforting than dangerous it is worth becoming more aware of specific foods eaten and your body's reaction to them. Once the culprit or culprits are identified the suggested techniques below should assist in reducing symptoms of food insensitivity and mild food allergy.

Reduce Negative Reactions Caused By Food Allergies and Food Sensitivity

Tried and tested techniques are available to enable a sufferer to reduce or eliminate the effects of food allergies. A low-allergen diet may vary from one person to another, depending on the severity of the symptoms. Depending on the nature and severity of the food allergy some options are:

1. Take a break from eating the offending food

This is undertaken once the offending food is identified and the person refrains from eating it for a period of time. The period of abstinence from the trigger food will vary and may be as long as many months.

The goal is that the body's immune system 'forgets' the food and stops seeing it as a threat to defend against and consequently setting up an immune reaction.

It may be necessary to completely eliminate the food from their diet. In cases of severe reaction this is the only safe option as the symptoms can be life-threatening.

2. Eat the food on a rotation basis

This is when the food that caused the allergy is still eaten but only once or twice a week, giving the body enough time to clear the offending food before reintroducing the same kind of food in the body.

This can be very effective in cases of food sensitivity as the digestive system is not overloaded with foods it has trouble digesting due to reduced enzyme levels.

Peanut Allergy Symptoms and Treatments

For several years now, scientists have been trying to find an effective peanut allergy treatment but so far their efforts have yet to produce any positive result. This is definitely not good news for the more than 3.3 million people in the United States alone who are suffering from this type of allergy.

In the meantime, the best thing sufferers can do is to avoid eating or coming into contact with peanuts altogether so as to save them from experiencing an allergic reaction. Severe sufferers do not have to even ingest peanuts - exposure can be enough to trigger a dangerous histamine reaction.

Typical Symptoms of a Peanut Allergy

Most food allergies produce reactions such as vomiting, diarrhea or a breakout of hives. With peanut allergies it is often very different and usually a lot worse. Some of the typical symptoms are breathing difficulties, stomach cramps, indigestion and swelling.

In the more severe cases anaphylactic shock can occur along with profuse sweating, which are the results of a rise of histamine levels in blood. Without proper and immediate peanut allergy treatment, these symptoms can lead to the decrease of blood flow to the various organs of the body, heart failure, or death.

Due to the potential life-threatening consequences of a severe allergic reaction do not delay seeking medical attention - phone the emergency hotline number immediately. Responders have the skills and equipment to deal with this emergency. Follow their instructions!

Self-administered treatment is mostly limited to -

1) Adrenaline injections. Although not a real peanut allergy treatment, adrenaline or epinephrine shots can considerably reduce the risk of anaphylactic shock and could potentially save your life. These substances can increase blood circulation, boost heart rate, and relax the muscles, thus contradicting the effects of the heightened histamine levels in your body.

2) Oral antihistamines. Again, these medications are by no means to be considered as real peanut allergy treatments but they can be quite effective in reducing the symptoms of the allergic reaction.

Antihistamines work best with mild to moderate cases. For more serious cases, these medications will not do much at all.

To date, these two options are the only ones that come close to being considered actual peanut allergy treatments. If you are allergic to these foods obviously the best thing you can do is to stay away from them as much as possible. Of course this is much easier said than done.

Peanuts are often used as ingredients in other foods like chocolate, sauces, and many others. They are also processed on assembly lines which may be used to process other food in a later run. This can lead to traces of peanuts contaminating the next food line.



Exposure to this food can be enough to endanger a peanut allergy sufferer. For this reason it is mandatory in many places to place food warnings on packaging warning consumers of this risk.

Researchers continue to work hard in order to find an effective peanut allergy treatment. The studies have been showing a lot of promise in recent years so it might be possible that we will see a real treatment that works within the next few years. For those at constant risk of an allergic reaction this will not come soon enough.

What Is A Wheat Allergy?

Wheat allergies are not very common but they can trigger some very serious reactions in affected individuals. If you have a wheat allergy you do not necessarily have a gluten allergy, you have an allergy to some or all of the components in the wheat. Gluten is just one component of wheat, so the two allergies are different.

In some cases, the wheat allergy reactions are quite mild and may go away on their own without medical treatment. In other cases the symptoms can be more severe.



If you suspect that you or a family member may have a wheat allergy the following information will be of benefit to you. Being prepared will enable a more thoughtful and safer response to any problem.

Wheat is the basic ingredient in making most bread products. Unfortunately people who have wheat allergies will have to refrain from eating bread and other kinds of wheat-based foods. This is obviously a difficult thing to do, especially in our culture where bread is a staple in most diets. However eating foods that contain wheat is not the only way you can suffer an allergic reaction.

Another common source of wheat allergies is the wheat flour itself. If an allergic person inhales this flour, he will likely exhibit all the same reactions as he would if he had ingested the wheat. Often the allergic response in these cases can be even more severe.

Please note that not all gluten-free foods are wheat free. So be careful. According to studies, wheat allergies may also be triggered by wheat derivatives, such as gluten and albumin. Therefore, if you are a wheat allergy sufferer you should check the nutritional information of any product before buying it to make sure that it does not contain any potentially dangerous ingredient that you personally are allergic to.

Some of the most common signs of wheat allergies are stomach aches, vomiting and dizziness. In most cases, these symptoms show up in varying degrees shortly after the ingestion of wheat. Other cases may also show symptoms including rashes and eczema.

Diagnosing Wheat Allergies

If you are manifesting possible signs and symptoms, the first thing you have to do is to verify if it is actually wheat which is causing the problem. Have you been eating a lot of wheat-based food products lately? Have you been exposed to wheat flour? Do the symptoms intensify shortly after eating wheat-based foods?

If you have answered yes to these questions then it is highly probable that wheat may be at the root of your problem. This is only a start and should be determined conclusively by a process of elimination. This may entail keeping a food diary so you can more accurately pinpoint the causes of your reaction.

For wheat allergies that are caused by ingestion, the best remedy is to obviously eliminate any of these foods from your diet. This may not be easy at first, especially if you are used to eating bread or cereals.

However there are many non-wheat alternatives available in breads and other foods that will make the transition easier. There are also websites, books and organizations devoted to providing advice on living a non-wheat lifestyle.

If the allergic reactions are being caused by inhalation awareness is required to prevent exposure to areas where this may occur. If your employment puts you in such places then you must minimize the risk of inhalation by wearing the proper masks. If possible make your employer aware of the issue and seek re-deployment to an area which is safer for you.

Allergic Conjunctivitis or Eye Allergy

If your eyes are suddenly tearing up a lot and feeling extremely itchy, red and swollen, chances are you may be suffering from allergic conjunctivitis. This is a fairly common eye issue which is also known as "pinkeye" due to the bright red, bloodshot appearance that accompanies this condition.

Many people will suffer from allergic conjunctivitis at least once during their lifetime. It is important to seek immediate medical treatment if you suspect this is your eye problem. The symptoms of allergic conjunctivitis can rapidly become worse, particularly in warmer climates.

What Is Allergic Conjunctivitis?

During an episode of allergic conjunctivitis the white part of the eye and the inner surface of the eyelid both become inflamed. These areas of the eye are covered with a thin membrane called the conjunctiva. The term "Allergic Conjunctivitis" refers to an uncomfortable situation that occurs when this special membrane becomes inflamed due to an external allergen.

5 Types of Eye Allergy

Many people don't realize that there are actually five different kinds of allergic conjunctivitis. In order to determine a specific treatment plan, you will first need to identify which of the five kinds you are suffering from.

1. SAC - Seasonal Allergic Conjunctivitis

Seasonal Allergic Conjunctivitis is the most common. Certain individuals suffer from this condition as the seasons change. Pollen from certain trees or ground flora is typically the main culprit that causes the eyes to become itchy, red, and swollen.

Many people who suffer from SAC are also susceptible to allergic rhinitis, which is a condition where the nose gets red, itchy, and watery. This can be triggered by the same allergens.

2. PAC - Perennial Allergic Conjunctivitis

Perennial Allergic Conjunctivitis is another common kind which takes place all year round. This condition is often triggered by animal fur, feathers and dust mites.

Perennial Allergic Conjunctivitis can also be caused by airborne chemicals such as: pesticides, perfumes, hair sprays, and similar chemical spray products. The symptoms can show up any time of the year but are typically more intense during the changing of the seasons.

3. Vernal Conjunctivitis

One of the less common varieties of the allergy is Vernal Conjunctivitis. This condition occurs more frequently in males and can actually lead to vision impairment.

4. Atopic Keratoconjunctivitis

Atopic Keratoconjunctivitis, on the other hand, often occurs along with asthma and allergic rhinitis. This condition is manifested by eye discharge.

5. Giant Papillary Conjunctivitis

Giant Papillary Conjunctivitis symptoms are triggered by the wearing of contact lenses, eye prosthetics, and surgery sutures.

In this type of conjunctivitis, bumps develop on the inside of the eyelid.

What Are the Best Treatments?

For the two more common types of allergic conjunctivitis treatment options are simple; you can use an over-the-counter or prescription medication.

For those who wish to try a natural approach, (or who have to wait awhile before seeing a doctor) using a separate, warm Chamomile tea bag on each eye can be quite soothing.

Try not to touch your eyes with your hands as it is easy to spread this condition between the eyes. To limit cross-contamination, use only your left hand to touch your left eye and only your right hand to touch your right eye.

As for the other eye allergy types, it is recommended that you see an optometrist for the best allergic conjunctivitis treatment. Using over-the-counter remedies for these problems may aggravate the situation and risk permanent damage to your vision.

Of course, determining what triggers the allergic reaction in the first place and avoiding that substance as much as possible would be extremely helpful to prevent future outbreaks.

Seasonal Allergies

The arrival of warm weather is a blessing for most, but for many people, seasons like spring and fall mean something much worse: seasonal allergies.

The sneezing, itchy eyes, headaches, and runny noses can ruin a bright, sunny day and force sufferers inside for the season, since seasonal allergies are unfortunately easily triggered.

This condition can severely interfere with a person's daily routine or work performance.

Most cases are triggered by exposure to pollen grains, molds, mites, and other particles in the air, which means anyone suffering from seasonal allergies, can be affected simply by walking outside.

Anyone can suffer from seasonal allergies, but people with conditions such as asthma and allergic rhinitis are even more at risk. Allergies arise when an irritant somehow makes its way into the nasal passage. There, it gets into contact with the mucous membranes.

In someone unaffected by allergies, the irritant would cause a mere sneezing fit, during which the particle would be expelled. If you do suffer from allergies, it's much more likely that the membranes will begin to swell.

From there, the irritant causes many adverse reactions, such as breathing difficulties, itchiness of the throat, watery eyes, and a runny nose.

In some rare case, an allergic reaction can prove to be extremely serious. These cases require the victim to be hospitalized for their treatment.

More often than not, however, seasonal allergies are only moderately severe, and on the more severe end of the spectrum, sufferers may believe they are actually suffering from a bad cold.

How to Prevent Seasonal Allergies

While there isn't a cure for seasonal allergies, there are many ways to prevent them. One way is to increase your intake of essential fatty acids. Increasing these types of food, especially those that come from fishes and flax-seed, can help preventing allergic reactions during the peak allergy seasons.

If you see improvements, you may also want to eat foods rich in Vitamin C, like fresh fruits and vegetables. Doing so can actually reduce the levels of histamine in your blood.

Another way to avoid allergic reactions is to simply stay inside. While this method isn't practical for those with careers and busy schedules, it's the easiest way to avoid pollen and other allergens. Check the local weather alerts for their pollen levels. If they read high, you may find it helpful to stay indoors during these periods to lessen your exposure.

If you have the budget, you can even plan a vacation somewhere far away during your peak allergy season at home.

If you absolutely must go outside, cover your nose and mouth with something thick to prevent yourself from inhaling any irritants. Make sure to change your clothes as soon as you get inside, since pollen can cling to the fabric and cause a reaction if you don't change right away.

Particles can cling to strands as small as your hair, even if you have been outdoors for a few minutes. A quick shower is the best way to ensure that you've rid yourself completely of contaminants.

Budding flowers and blooming trees don't have to mean sneezing and congestion. Warm weather doesn't have to equal misery. If you follow these simple steps, you can limit the negative effects of your allergies and appreciate the benefits of a change of season.

Mold Allergies – Symptoms and Relief

Many people suffer allergic reactions from the spores of mold that become airborne. As mold thrives in dark, damp environments; basements, piles of leaves and garbage cans are common places for it to grow.

As there is no permanent treatment for these allergies, treatment is based on avoidance of the allergens and gaining relief from the often distressing associated symptoms.

What Are The Symptoms of Mold Allergies?

Before looking for mold allergy relief methods you need to verify that you are indeed suffering from a mold allergy and not some other health problem.

Some of the common signs that you should look out for include: hives or rashes, sneezing, itchy and watery eyes, a runny or stuffy nose, and breathing difficulties or wheezing.

Since these are basically the same symptoms that come with many other allergies, and are also similar to the symptoms of hay fever, it will require a real process of elimination to determine if mold is the root cause of your allergy.

Are Medications Effective for Giving Relief?

There is plenty of disagreement on whether medications are the best form of mold allergy relief treatment. These medications do normally work quickly and can provide immediate relief for many sufferers.

Of course, there are individuals who don't respond well to medication and may suffer further from side effects brought about by the product.

Medications are also not always recommended for those who have special medical conditions. If you have an underlying medical condition or are taking medications for a different ailment, before taking any medications for mold allergy relief it is important that you consult with a doctor or pharmacist.

Are There Natural Relief Methods?

If you wish to achieve relief from the symptoms of mold allergy without subjecting yourself to the possible risks caused by medications, the obvious and most effective natural way to prevent mold allergy symptoms is to avoid exposure to the allergens if at all possible.

There are certain food sources that are more prone to mold. These foods include: cheese, buttermilk, sour cream, soy sauce, mushrooms, breads and yeast items, and dried fruits.

Foods containing vinegar such as salad dressings, pickles and sauerkraut are also common culprits. This does not necessarily mean you have to abstain from these foods, but it does require extra care in storage, handling and preparation of them. It has been noted that people who consume large amounts of garlic seldom suffer from allergies.

Choosing which treatment to use will also depend on how serious your allergies are. If the symptoms are very severe it may be necessary to take medication or to have an inhaler on hand. For milder symptoms focusing on reducing exposure may be preferred, especially if the medications themselves cause further problems.

Cleaning the house and making sure it is as free of mold and dust as possible is a very effective way of reducing the causes of allergic reactions. Having the vents in your home and your furnace filters cleaned on a regular basis may also greatly improve the air quality and reduce allergens within your home as well.

In the event you do have to enter damp, dark places such as your basement or crawlspace for some reason, make sure to wear a mask over your nose and mouth. If you know you have a mold sensitivity or allergy it is best to avoid going to these places at all.

Anaphylaxis – A Severe Allergy Complication

Our immune system is the “protector” of our body. It protects us from foreign organisms such as bacteria and viruses to help protect against illness. On rare occasions our immune system may attack our own cells or body substances that it considers to be a foreign body.

Sometimes it gets too sensitive and creates an excessive reaction to a relatively non-threatening substance.

Our Immune System and Allergic Reactions

The consequent reaction by the body causes more distress than the substance itself would have. This hypersensitive reaction by our immune system is termed allergic reaction or allergy.

It is a condition wherein the body produces an immune over-response even if only a small amount of the triggering substance is encountered. Common immune responses of our body include itchiness, swelling, sneezing and pain.

Allergy is termed an immediate immune response due to its characteristic rapid reaction to a stimulus – the allergen. Immune responses can be relatively mild such as a runny nose, swelling, redness in the body, and itchiness. These allergies can be caused by various things like pollens, food, chemical substances and some medications.

A severe and extremely dangerous form of allergy is called anaphylaxis. When a person is experiencing anaphylaxis, they may first feel milder allergy symptoms like sneezing, redness and itchiness. This can escalate to feeling nauseous and then vomiting.

Anaphylactic Shock

These symptoms can be mistaken for flu or an upset stomach and not given serious attention. The patient may then experience diarrhea and clamminess. In a full-blown anaphylactic episode respiratory distress (difficulty in breathing) can occur quickly.

- It is imperative to seek emergency medical care immediately, as anaphylaxis, if not treated promptly can cause death.

Most anaphylaxis occurs due to food, drug, or sting/bite allergy. These types of allergy are most dangerous as the allergens are being introduced to the body through oral or blood route. They will affect the muscles and organs inside the body, not just outside, so the effect is more dangerous and rapid.

The muscles of the throat and airways will be inflamed and will start to swell thus preventing passage of air. It is necessary to intubate the patient if this symptom occurs. It might also affect the blood vessels thus preventing adequate flow of blood and will result in low blood pressure due to vasodilation.

During allergic reaction and anaphylaxis, the white blood cells release too much histamine which causes the symptoms. The only way to alleviate such symptoms is to take anti-histamine medications. But during anaphylaxis, the throat and esophagus might be so closed that oral taking of anti-histamine medications becomes impossible.

The most common treatment for anaphylaxis is epinephrine, a form of adrenaline that can be administered intramuscularly or intravenously. Epinephrine promotes vasoconstriction and rapid blood circulation. Care needs to be taken if the patient has a history of heart complaints as this drug also affects the heart rate.

Common victims of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis are children as it is difficult to monitor every movement or contact a child makes. It is therefore important to be aware of possible allergies your child may have and to limit contact with any known allergens. Appropriate and rapid management if an attack occurs is vital if symptoms of anaphylaxis are observed.

Natural Allergy Remedies

There's a change in the air concerning allergies and no it's not just the usual stuffy, drippy, irritation sufferers are used to, nor is it the woozy disorientation, accelerated heart rate and clammy palms of allergy medication.

It's the recent trend of alleviating allergy symptoms with natural home remedies.

You may wonder why when we have more sprays, pills, drops, creams and syrups than ever before on our pharmacy and supermarket shelves. Price may be one factor as those that suffer allergies suffer long term, unlike a cold or flu.

Every spring season or every dusty adventure can bring out symptoms making for a costly time (or a profitable one for manufacturers).

The large selection of antihistamines, decongestants and corticosteroids available also carry with them an even longer list of possible side effects, some of which may cause very real concerns, especially when they begin to mention things like 'prolonged use may increase the risk of developing' glaucoma, osteoporosis, stomach ulcers, cataracts and muscle weakness.

Many are also unsuitable for people suffering from other medical conditions such as heart disease, hypertension and diabetes or if pregnant or breastfeeding. The good news however is that a wide range of natural remedies do exist and most are both affordable and accessible.

To understand how such natural remedies can alleviate symptoms of allergies it is first essential to understand what you are treating. Allergies are caused by an immune response more sensitive in some than others.

Normally innocuous substances such as pollen or dust are detected by the body and registered as potentially harmful allergens.

A substance called histamine is subsequently released which causes inflammation and effectively tries to 'wash away' the foreign body; this is why our eyes may swell, our nose runs, our respiratory system fills with mucous and we sneeze or cough.

Natural and Home Allergy Remedies

So what can we try in place of medicated treatment?

- Neti pots are traditionally used in India to clear congestion in the nose and sinuses and effectively wash away pollen or other irritants, a saline nasal spray will work in much the same way.
- Similar to this is the steam face bath; placing the face over a bowl of hot steaming water often containing eucalyptus oil or tea tree oil and inhaling.
- The use of aromatherapy and essential oils work for treating allergies naturally. Their uses include anti-inflammatory properties, expectorant and immunity stimulation. German Chamomile is a natural anti-histamine and an excellent anti-inflammatory. Other oils such as eucalyptus oil for nasal congestion and tea tree oil for soothing rashes are also popular.
- Peppermint tea has anti-inflammatory, decongestant and antibacterial constituents, teas or warm drinks may be made from other natural products too; such as orange, lemon and ginger, flavored with honey which can be soothing on its own. It is also believed that consuming locally sourced honey will have desensitizing affect for hay fever sufferers.
- Many foods in fact can be used to ward off or treat allergy symptoms; wasabi, chili, mustard, turmeric and horseradish all pack a powerful decongestant punch.
- The fatty acid Omega-3 is an effective anti-inflammatory agent.
- Certain plants such as Quercetin, Stinging Nettles and Butterbur actually work to inhibit histamine release.

Remember to always consult your doctor before taking any plant derived extracts and supplements, especially if you have underlying medical conditions.

Thank You

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