

# Keep Hayfever at Bay

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In the Western hemisphere, Summer is in the air, bringing sunshine, new growth and longer daylight hours. Along with these uplifting changes comes tree and grass pollens, dust, and other triggers that can cause Hayfever or Allergic Rhinitis attacks in some people. Common symptoms of hayfever include nasal discharge, sneezing, headache, itching of the eyes and nose, lethargy, aching teeth, sinus pressure, loss of taste and blocked nasal breathing. The inner membrane of the nasal passages become swollen and often unbearable.

The basic medical treatment for hayfever includes antihistamines, corticosteroids and guidelines to avoid direct contact with the offensive allergens. Sometimes more aggressive treatment is used to build up the body's immune resistance through the administration of a series of injections or oral drops containing minute doses of extracts from the particular allergens involved. Recent research indicates that certain nutrients and herbs can also be beneficial to hayfever sufferers. Adding these natural and complementary aids to the diet can provide added ammunition against unpleasant hayfever symptoms.

## Nutritional Recommendations

**B Vitamins** are highly recommended for all allergy sufferers including those experiencing hayfever. Although particular B vitamins are identified as more valuable than others, it is wise to take a balanced B vitamin complex preparation to ensure that all of the B vitamins remain balanced in the body. Look for a supplement containing Thiamine (B1), Riboflavin (B2), Niacin (B3), Pyridoxine (B6), Pantothenic Acid, Folic Acid, B12, Biotin, Inositol and Choline in balanced proportions.



**Vitamin C** (500 mg) combined with Bioflavonoids help to boost the immune system and have an anti-inflammatory effect on the nasal passages.

**Vitamin A** (5,000 to 10,000 IU per day) also boost the immune system function and enhance the resilience of the nasal passage cells.

**Vitamin E** (400 IU per day) boosts the elasticity of the nasal mucous membrane cells.

Food Allergy Precautions:

Careful attention to the diet is also warranted during hayfever season. People who are allergic to natural substances in the environment may also be allergic or sensitive to particular foods as well. Make a point of avoiding certain foods such as wheat products, eggs, milk and dairy, citrus, chocolate, shellfish, nuts and nut butters.

Herbal Supplement Recommendations

**Ma Huang or Chinese Ephedra** provides a natural source of ephedrine and pseudo-ephedrine which help to constrict the sinus blood vessels relieving some of the sneezing, nasal pressure, secretion and itchiness. Look for herbal decongestants that contain Ephedra. Do be cautious though: use of this preparation should be restricted to one week at a time to avoid potential central nervous system overstimulation.

**Echinacea and Goldenseal** make a fine combination to add to the treatment regime for hayfever. Echinacea acts as an anti-viral agent while Goldenseal is anti-bacterial which help to prevent sinusitis. Goldenseal is also soothing to the throat and sinus mucous membranes. These two herbs help to boost the immune system and work to release toxic metabolites that build up during prolonged allergic responses.

**Licorice Root** strengthens the adrenal glands which aids in dealing with hayfever reactions.

**Astragalus**, another Chinese herb helps to strengthen the body's defense system or protective energy to help in the resistance of infections.

**Elder Tree Leaves** ease congestion and inflammation in hayfever, sinusitis and allergic responses.

**Stinging Nettles** contains properties that help to relieve allergy symptoms including coughs, runny nose and congestion. A caution though: pregnant women should refrain from using nettles.

