

HEALTH MATTERS

Sniff!! It Must Be Allergy Season

BY RENEE LANG, ND

Allergies. Fall arrives with mold and ragweed allergies. If you don't suffer from allergies and/or

system as harmful. The immune system then reacts to this substance by producing chemicals, mainly histamines, which are responsible for the typical allergy symptoms.

responsible for eliminating waste and toxins. When the liver is unable to keep up with the demand for elimination, other organs including the lungs, skin, and digestive

From a Naturopathic perspective, allergies result from improper elimination of waste and toxins, and poor diet and lifestyle choices.

Allergy symptoms include:

- Sneezing, often with a runny, stuffy nose
- Itchy eyes, nose, and throat
- Coughing and post-nasal drip
- Allergic shiners - dark circles under the eyes due to increased blood flow near the sinuses.
- Allergic salute - a crease across the nose caused by constant upward motion to relieve itching.
- Watery eyes
- Mental fog and tiredness

Why is the system overactive?

Most people inherit their tendency toward being allergic from their parents. They don't necessarily inherit the same allergy, but rather a hyperactive immune system. An individual has a 50 percent chance of having allergies if one parent is allergic and a 75 percent chance if both parents are allergic. However, genetics are not the only reason that an individual suffers from allergies. Toxic burden in the body from substances in the environment, diet, and lifestyle choices contribute to allergies.

The Naturopathic medicine approach to determining an individual's susceptibility to allergies is different than conventional medicine's. The body is one whole organism in which all parts interact with all other parts. The toxic burden in a body increases an individual's susceptibility to allergies. Americans are increasingly exposed to chemicals and other toxins in their food from pesticides and preservatives, from alcohol, and other chemicals such as auto exhaust, factory emissions, and agricultural pesticides. If the intake of toxins is greater than elimination, there is a backup and a buildup of toxins in the body.

The liver is the main organ

tract will aid in the elimination process. When there is a significant buildup of toxins, the body becomes prone to illness and diseases such as allergies, cancer, and menstrual irregularities. Not everyone who experiences a high toxic burden will show signs of an increased allergic reactivity, but all people who have allergies will benefit from a program of decreasing their toxic burden.

Toxic burden is decreased with a consistent exercise regimen and eating easily digested and nutritious foods. When an individual eats a food that they may have sensitivity to, or an overt allergy to, their body is not able to properly digest that food. As a result, larger molecules are transported through the digestive tract causing inflammation and fermentation. Inflammation contributes to allergy symptoms and fermentation produces additional toxins. Avoiding foods that cause a reaction will decrease inflammation and fermentation. Eating a wide variety of foods will decrease chances of creating additional food sensitivities.

Treatment options

Conventional treatments of allergies include antihistamines, decongestants, and nasal sprays. These medications often reduce symptoms for most people, but have side effects and do not address the underlying predisposition toward allergies. For some people, medications decrease in efficacy over time, and more potent versions may be needed to cope with their symptoms. Without addressing the underlying predisposition or root cause of the symptoms, these individuals will most likely have to take the medication for the rest of their lives.



Renee Lang, N.D.

allergic conditions, you probably know someone who does. Allergies affect more than 50 million Americans, about 1 in 6 people, and are the sixth leading cause of chronic disease in the United States. Treatment of allergies costs the health care system about \$18 billion dollars per year. In 2002 alone, there were about 14 million office visits for allergic rhinitis (stuffy, runny nose due to allergies).

The number of people suffering from allergies and allergy-related conditions has grown in the past 15 years and continues to grow. This is good news for pharmaceutical companies producing the medications, but bad news for the individual sufferers. According to an article in "Drug Topics," sales of over-the-counter (OTC) allergy medicines were about \$1.7 billion for the year 2003. This is due in part to the switch from prescription to OTC status of Claritin and Claritin D.

What are allergies?

Allergies are an over-reactive response by the immune system to a foreign substance. Anytime a foreign substance enters the body, from the air or food, it comes into contact with the immune system. The immune system determines whether it is part of the body or foreign, and then if it is harmless or harmful. If the substance is determined to be harmful, such as bacteria or virus, then the immune system mobilizes in order to get rid of it and keep the body healthy.

In individuals suffering from allergies, pollen (a normally non-harmful substance) is recognized by the immune

THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE

WILLIAM COIL

NATIONALLY CERTIFIED MASSAGE THERAPIST



Deep Muscle Therapy • Sports Massage
Chronic Pain Management • Stress Management

Practice limited to male clientele.

Gift Certificates Available: \$40/1 hour • \$60/1 1/2 hours

802.658.2390 • 800.830.5025



Support the
advertisers
who support
US!

Say you saw
their ad in:

**out
in the
mountains**

A MOST WONDERFUL
VERMONT EXPERIENCE!



INNKEEPERS
MARY BOUVIER & MOIRA DONOVAN

- *QUIET, ROMANTIC GETAWAY
- *LOCATED IN THE HEART OF VERMONT'S SKI INDUSTRY
- *CIVIL UNION HAVEN!

WWW.DONOMARINN.COM
802-644-2937

JEFFERSONVILLE, VT

HE MAY TAKE CHANCES...
BUT YOU CAN TAKE CONTROL.

BURLINGTON

361 Pearl Street
Mondays 4-7
800-649-2437

RUTLAND

27 S. Main St.
Wednesdays 3-6
802-775-5884

ST. JOHNSBURY

1290 Hospital Drive
Suite 1
Wednesdays 11-1
802-748-9061

MONTPELIER

73 Main St. Ste 401
10/6 and 10/20, 2-4
800-649-2437



GET TESTED.

**FREE HIV TESTS
RESULTS IN 20 MINUTES**

Anonymous. Oral Swab. 99.6% Accurate.
Walk-in hours at all offices or call for an appointment.
CALL 1-800-649-AIDS FOR MORE INFO.

ONLY AT:

VERMONT CARES

Committee for AIDS Resources, Education & Services

CONTINUED ON P.15 →