



The Wellness Family

Dr. John Ferguson Keeps You Informed

Seasonal Allergies and Chiropractic

Sniffing, sneezing and coughing are typically the signs of a cold coming on; but for those who have a family member that struggles with seasonal allergies, you know that's not always the case. Oftentimes, those itchy eyes are a sure sign that allergy season is coming and with it the head congestion associated with an allergic response. Of course, it doesn't have to be that way; while the allopathic community says that allergies are incurable and only manageable, there's more to the story.

What are Seasonal Allergies?

According to the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, seasonal allergies, like other allergies, develop when the body's immune system becomes sensitized and overreacts to something in the environment that typically causes no problem in most people. Typical airborne allergens include pollen, dust, mold, pet dander and smoke (either cigarette smoke or that produced by burning paper, chemicals or waste products).

When exposed to an allergen, the body triggers the immune system to go into action. The immune system cells, known as "mast cells", release a substance called histamine that attaches to receptors in blood vessels causing them to enlarge. Histamine also binds to other receptors causing redness, swelling, itching and changes in secretion.

While "allergy season" is considered to be in the Spring (flowers blooming and pollination) the truth is that tree, grass and plant pollination happens throughout the year and, depending upon the allergy, can cause symptoms all year long.

Not only are allergies affected by what is being pollinated, but there are climate factors that can influence the severity of the symptoms, these include:

- Tree, grass and ragweed pollens thrive during cool nights and warm days
- Molds grow quickly in heat and high humidity
- Pollen levels tend to peak in the morning hours
- Rain washes pollen away, but pollen counts can soar after rainfall
- On a day with no wind, airborne allergens are grounded
- When the day is windy and warm, pollen counts surge
- Moving to another climate to avoid allergies or airborne allergens

Those with seasonal allergies know it is impossible to find a climate that has no airborne allergens.

What are the symptoms?

Due to the body's response to an allergen, symptoms will typically look a lot like a head cold. However, allergy

symptoms vary greatly and generally include: headaches or migraines; stuffy or runny nose; diarrhea or vomiting; shortness of breath or asthma-like symptoms; swelling of the face and eyes; or itchy or watery eyes.

These symptoms can be quite annoying but, except for the sensitive asthmatic, are generally not life-threatening.

For those diagnosed with asthma, attacks can be triggered by allergies, which may temporarily increase the inflammation of the asthmatic's airways. Most airborne allergens, such as animal dander, dust mites, mold and pollen, are common triggers. It's very important to



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prepare for allergy season so be sure to speak with a Family Wellness Chiropractor regarding this condition.

What are the typical treatments?

Typically, a medical doctor is going to be focused on relieving the symptoms, not getting to their source, and so will generally recommend over-the-counter allergy medications.

For the child, a pediatrician will commonly suggest diphenhydramine, sold under the brand name Benadryl. Before following this advice consider the side-effects associated with this chemical: dryness of the mouth, nose and throat; drowsiness; disturbed coordination; upset stomach; dizziness; chest congestion; and headaches. In some cases, these can even include: heart palpitations or increased heart rate; blurred or double vision; hyperactivity or excitability (especially in children); or nervousness or anxiety.

Parents should also be aware, before giving this drug to a child, that this same chemical is used in most over-the-counter sleep aids, including Tylenol PM.

The most popular recommended over-the-counter for adolescents and adults is cetirizine HCL, sold under the brand name Zyrtec. This drug is taken to provide temporary relief of runny nose, sneezing, nasal stuffiness and itchy or watery eyes associated with common inhalant allergies. However, the side-effects from this chemical include drowsiness, tiredness, dry mouth and stomach

pain. Serious allergic reactions include rash, swelling of the face, tongue or throat, severe dizziness and trouble breathing.

What are healthier options?

Treating the symptoms may seem easiest, but it's important to understand that the side-effects of these chemicals increase in severity with long-term usage and may even eventually worsen the symptoms. The best treatment for allergies is to eliminate the source of the allergens. This can be done with a few simple steps:

- Replace old pillows, rugs and blankets – these dust collectors can easily be removed from the home
- Wash, dry and pack stuffed animals in air-tight containers – while these dust magnets are more difficult to remove from the home because of the child's attachment, they can be stored in such a way as to limit their ability to collect dust and aggravate allergies
- Wash and dry bed linens at least twice a month including blankets and quilts
- Avoid white sugar – refined sugar has no nutritional value and actually overtaxes the body during digestion; instead substitute with honey
- Avoid dairy products – dairy increases the production of mucus and can mimic an allergic reaction
- Avoid grains – difficult to digest and a common allergen (especially in children)
- Eat whole foods that are prepared at home. It's important to establish a regular eating schedule that includes healthier foods to build the immune system, which will actually help to alleviate allergic reactions

A few simple steps to reduce airborne allergens may result in a marked improvement of allergy symptoms.

Are there healthier choices?

An important first step in treating allergies will be to eliminate the cause of the allergies but this may not be easy to determine right away. Items that have been in your home for a long time can sometimes be overlooked in the search for the allergen culprit. In the meantime,

there are always healthier choices than over-the-counter chemicals, including the following:

- Essential oils – peppermint, basil, eucalyptus, lemon and tea tree oil are the top 5 essential oils when dealing with allergies (learn more at draxe.com)
- Vitamin C – taken daily can block the histamine that causes the allergy symptoms
- Apple Cider Vinegar – this most popular home remedy should be taken as 2 tbsp Apple Cider Vinegar, mixed with 4 oz of water and 1 tbsp of natural honey up to three times a day
- Raw Honey – 2 tbsp of natural, local honey up to three times a day has been known to relieve allergy symptoms
- Bromelain – this pineapple extract decreases the inflammation associated with allergies
- Zinc – helps control inflammation in the respiratory tract and supports proper immune function

One of the primary benefits of home remedies, as opposed to over-the-counter drugs, is the absence of chemicals in the body that may create their own problems in side effects.

The Chiropractic Factor

One of the primary causes of allergies is an impaired immune system, which substantially increases the risk of allergic reactions. "This occurs when the immune system becomes stressed due to an overload of toxins," says C. Gableman, MD, a practitioner of environmental medicine.

Your Doctor of Chiropractic is the only healthcare professional that recognizes the important role a healthy nervous system plays in a healthier immune system. Most, if not all, over-the-counter and prescription allergy treatments adversely affect the nervous system, which means that they will adversely affect your overall health and wellness.

Many parents report that their children's allergies improve with regular Chiropractic care; so, before you reach for a chemical, reach for the phone and schedule an appointment with your Family Wellness Chiropractor.



Dear Patient,

Dr. John is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.

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