



Give hayfever the heave-ho!

Sneezing, itchy, watery eyes, wheezing, and coughing – who needs them? Naturopath Toni Green shows you how to treat and cure hayfever, without resorting to antihistamines.

* D-I-Y with Toni: Turmeric mylk

Stir ½ teaspoon turmeric and a sprinkle of black pepper into 1 cup of warm almond mylk, and whisk well until turmeric is completely blended. Add honey to taste, and drink 2-3 times daily to clear the allergic reaction.

Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)

This common kitchen spice contains curcumin, a powerful phytochemical with immunoprotective, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant actions that compare favourably with steroidal and nonsteroidal drugs. Research published in *Molecular Nutrition & Food Research* shows that turmeric actually reduces mast cell degranulation, which in turn prevents the release of histamine, the chemical responsible for the allergic response. And a meta-analysis published in the *Journal of Alternative & Complementary Medicine* concluded that curcumin acts as a natural leukotriene inhibitor, making it beneficial for bronchial asthma as well as allergies and other lung problems.

Albizia (*Albiza lebbeck*)

A herb long used in Ayurvedic medicine for strengthening lung function and clearing mucus, albizia is very helpful for sinus congestion as well as alleviating often-related allergic symptoms

like hives and eczema. A study published in *Immunopharmacology & Immunotoxicology* shows that albizia works much like turmeric, via saponins that down-regulate the histamine release from mast cells and decrease production of lipoxygenase and hyaluronidase (key enzymes that initiate and maintain the inflammatory and allergic response), which in turn reduces itching skin, hives, wheezing, and post-nasal drip. Albizia also has a mild suppressive effect on allergy-inducing antibodies.

Baical skullcap (*Scutellaria baicalensis*)

A very effective remedy for hayfever and other allergies, this reduces inflammation and swelling by inhibiting production of inflammatory prostaglandins. It also slows the body's ability to bind immune cells with antigens, which inhibits histamine release by mast cells. Research indicates that it is the flavonoids present in baical skullcap which are most effective for treating allergic symptoms, with one study, published in *Planta Medica*, reporting that its effects were comparable to the anti-inflammatory drug prednisolone.

Ribwort (*Plantago lanceolata*)

Also known as English plantain, the leaves of ribwort are a traditional Western herbal medicine for catarrh. It's a key natural remedy for reducing mucus, plus it has antibacterial and antispasmodic actions, making it helpful for hayfever, sinus infections, and coughs as well. Ribwort heals and soothes inflamed tissues of the nose, mouth and lungs, without having the drying effect of conventional antihistamines. I use this herb widely for treating sinusitis and nasal congestion, in both adults and children. Ribwort tea is listed in *Rational Phytotherapy: A Physician's Guide to Herbal Medicine* as being "particularly effective for strengthening weak lungs".

Eyebright (*Euphrasia officinalis*)

This herb contains tannins, which are astringent compounds that reduce swelling and inflammation in the eyes, as well as imparting a protective coating on the eye surface. These tannins also reduce mucus secretions and tone and strengthen respiratory tissues, making it helpful for sinusitis, chest congestion, watery eyes, blocked nose, and hayfever as well. Research published in *Planta Medica* showed that one of eyebright's active constituents, aucubin, has a pronounced anti-inflammatory effect on swollen nasal tissue when either given orally or applied topically. *

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