

HAYFEVER

Who does it affect?

It is estimated that around 7 million people in the UK suffer from hayfever. The condition does not appear to be influenced by the age or sex of the sufferer although there is evidence that it is more prevalent in families that have a history of allergies although the allergic reactions of your ancestors may not have been hayfever.

Whilst hayfever is not ordinarily life threatening, it is very debilitating and can lead to complications such as perennial rhinitis (permanent stuffy/runny nose & sinusitis), asthma, secondary bacterial infections and a susceptibility to other allergens.



The Nature of the Condition:

Hayfever is caused by an allergic reaction to pollen. Some people are allergic to grass pollen and this means your hayfever can last from around mid May through to late July. Others are allergic to tree pollen and this reaction tends to start in March and goes on until mid to late May depending on the season. Hayfever can also be caused by moulds found in any damp area of the house – closets, cellars or even living rooms as well as on fruit, old wood and in garden soil.

People who are allergic to pollen are often allergic to pets and dustmites too in which case, they may suffer from low levels of rhinitis (stuffy, runny nose & mild sinusitis) throughout the year and it only becomes unbearable when pollen further overloads the immune system. In this instance, a year round programme of pet allergy prevention and dustmite treatments may alleviate the worst of the symptoms of hayfever too.

The Symptoms:

Hayfever symptoms are typically:

- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Itchy bloodshot eyes
- Stuffed up nose
- Itching around the face & mouth
- Exhaustion
- Sinusitis and blocked up sensation in ears
- Wheezing
- Burning in the throat

The Cause

The reaction is caused when the body wrongly cites pollen as a major hazard triggering a defensive response in the body --- a massive release of histamine that sets off the typical symptoms.

Medical Remedies

There are a plethora of alternatives on the market:

- Antihistamines – tablets or nasal sprays
- Anti-inflammatory nasal sprays & drops
- Decongestant sprays
- Eye drops
- Immunotherapy – Allergy Shots
- Acupuncture, Homeopathy & Herbal Medicines

Antihistamines – oral or nasal sprays are by far the most common. These work by blocking the production of histamine thus preventing the symptoms.

The “new” generation of oral antihistamines are less likely to cause drowsiness than the old but nevertheless have a long list of potential associated side effects including headaches, difficulty in passing urine, dry mouth, blurred vision, feelings of sickness or vomiting, constipation or diarrhea, palpitations, high blood pressure, dizziness, confusion, depression, disturbed sleep, tremors, fits, blood & liver disorders and hyperactivity in children.

The nasal sprays are more localized in their effects but only generally recommended for short term, localized relief for mild hayfever cases.

Anti-inflammatory nasal sprays & drops are also less potent than the oral antihistamines and designed to relieve sinusitis and localized discomfort. The cortisone (steroid) component is rapidly broken down so again, they are short acting. Side effects are not as common providing they are not over-used. However, some people do experience headaches and nose bleeds and the drops may also affect the eyes and have been linked to glaucoma.

Decongestant sprays effectively clear your nose but should not be used more a few days per week else rebound effects can occur namely headaches, dizziness, sneezing, dry nose, stinging, burning & taste alterations. Children are more vulnerable than adults.

Eye drops are designed to reduce irritation & to cleanse. Routine eyecare is recommended including the removal of eye make-up at night to give the skin time to breathe and the use of hypo-allergenic cosmetics & toiletries that limit exposure to other potential allergens when you are at your most vulnerable.

Immunotherapy is still in its infancy and only used in severe cases where benefits may outweigh the risks. It involves a protracted period of treatment with small doses of the offending allergen to try to condition the body to the allergen and prevent the histamine reaction. Unfortunately, we have a great deal to learn about the immune system and estimating the correct small dose programme for individuals can be high risk. Individuals vary greatly in their response so many medical practitioners are reluctant to go down this route.

Alternative Solutions

Acupuncture is effective for some and should not be ruled out. It has been demonstrated to reduce the immune response to an allergen as well as promote feelings of wellbeing. Homeopathy carries similar risk to those of immuno-therapy treatments and should only ever be used under the supervision of a qualified professional.

At Bio-Life, we believe in trying to reduce the level of the cause rather than treating the symptoms.

Firstly, we know that the pollen count is at its highest at midday and again around 5 to 6 pm in the evening. Needless to say, these are the hours when hayfever sufferers are strongly recommended to stay indoors if at all possible. Secondly, we have developed an environmentally friendly aerosol spray, AirCleanse™, that is designed to encapsulate and denature the pollen particles in your home. Limiting the number of hours to which you are exposed to the pollen is as effective as reducing the level of pollen in the air. If you do both then the symptoms are significantly reduced.

AirCleanse™ also contains Eucalyptus Essential oil and Peruvian balsam extracts proven to aid breathing and relieve nasal and bronchial congestion without the side effects of some of the medical alternatives.

AirCleanse™ also denatures pet & dustmite allergens and pollen particles in the air, all of which have an additive effect on the immune system of the vulnerable individual.

In pet owning homes, in independent trials carried out on **Bio-Life PetalCleanse™** revealed that reducing the pet allergen level in the home reduced the need for hayfever medication by two-thirds in the homes of hayfever sufferers even during the peak pollen season.

If you have a cat, dog or other small pet in the house, a weekly cleansing with the **PetalCleanse™** lotion can make a huge difference to the level of discomfort that you experience during the pollen season.

A once per month treatment of mattresses & furnishings with Bio-life **HomeCleanse™** reduces dustmite in the home and **FabriCleanse™** gets rid of pollen and dustmite in clothing. They are all contributory factors in this condition.

Other natural supplements that may help:

- Butterbur
- Ginko biloba

Both have been demonstrated to reduce the histamine reaction in the body.