

[IMAGE]

Spring Back From Allergy Symptoms

By Editorial Staff

Now that allergy season is in full swing, you may be experiencing some or all of these symptoms: coughing, itchy and watery eyes, itchy throat, nasal congestion, runny nose, or sneezing and wheezing. If this sounds familiar, you may be tempted to run to the drugstore for some over-the-counter relief, but don't forget about the side effects ... I once spent an entire spring carrying cough drops in my handbag because a side effect from my over-the-counter med dried out my throat to the point that I coughed excessively.

Sure, my nose wasn't runny and I was able to keep my eye makeup intact from the absence of that steady flow of tears, but I was obsessed with cough drops. Each day, thoughts similar to this pervaded my mind - do I have enough to get me through the day, should I stop at the store, what if they are out of my favorite brand? I finally gave up the over-the-counter med when a co-worker asked if I was any less miserable ... I wasn't.

So, instead of taking the common road, try the one less traveled and give Mother Earth a shot at getting rid of those annoying symptoms. Here are some easy and natural remedies that can get you feeling better in no time, and they will even help you save a little pocket-change.

Coughing

allergy - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Your body produces coughing as a response to both indoor and outdoor allergens, such as pollen, dust mites or pet dander. To combat this annoyance, try a spoonful of honey; it will coat your throat and help relieve the irritation. Some also say consuming local honey will help build up your allergy resistance. Probiotics are another option; although they won't directly relieve your cough, evidence suggests *Lactobacillus* may reduce allergies to pollen.

Itchy Throat

An itchy throat, caused by inhaled irritants, can be taken care of with a warm salt-water gargle; this will help reduce inflammation in your throat. Again, honey will do the trick to soothe your irritated throat as well. If a spoonful of honey doesn't sound agreeable, try stirring a tablespoon of it into your tea.

Milk with turmeric (the main spice in curry) is another option. Boil a cup of milk in a saucepan and add a teaspoon of turmeric; allow the milk to cool before drinking. You can find turmeric at vitamin and supplement stores. Apple-cider vinegar is another home remedy that will relieve an itchy throat; just add a tablespoon to hot water and sip.

Nasal Congestion

The discomfort you feel when you have allergy-related nasal congestion is caused by allergens that inflame the membranes of your nasal passages, which in turn produce extra mucus in an effort to flush out the irritant. To avoid the stuffed-up feeling keep your nasal passages and sinuses moist, try flushing them out with salt water, which will wash out mucus, allergens and other foreigners. You can use a syringe or a neti pot, but be sure to use distilled, sterile or previously boiled water for the salt-water mixture. Rinse the irrigation device after each use and leave out to air dry.

Another option is to use a humidifier, which will help break up the congestion. And staying hydrated can help with nasal congestion by thinning out the mucus, and may even prevent your sinuses from getting blocked up to begin with.

Runny Nose

Allergens can also cause your nose to run, and no one likes the sniffles, especially your co-workers. Again, flushing out your nasal passages is a good way to rid your sinuses of the allergens. As stated before, use a syringe or neti pot filled with a salt-water mixture.

Steam inhalation is also a good choice when trying to stop a runny nose (this also works with congestion). Fill a bowl halfway with hot water, tilt your face toward the bowl and place a towel over your head, position it to keep the steam from escaping. Then breathe deep so the steam will enter your nose. Make sure you close your eyes, as steam can damage them. You can also try adding herbs such as mint and ginger, or essential oils like eucalyptus and camphor.

Sneezing

Darn those allergens, they also cause sneezing. To tame your ah-choos, have a hot cup of chamomile tea, which has antihistamine properties that can give you relief. Another reliever is stinging nettle, which besides being high in iron, calcium, potassium, manganese, and vitamins A, C, and D, also has antihistamine

properties. This also helps with itchy, watery eyes. To use stinging nettle, you can make a tea or take a capsule of freeze-dried nettle extract.

Wheezing

Wheezing can be quite scary, particularly the sound, as it indicates a struggle to receive air into the lungs. This is caused by the airways swelling, often a symptom of asthma, which is heightened during allergy season. There are several natural remedies to get relief from wheezing. Consuming fish several times a week or taking a fish oil supplement can help regulate inflammation in the lungs, thus reducing wheezing. Mustard oil is also known to break down mucus build-up inside the airways and offer relief, and mixing it with camphor will increase its effectiveness. Slightly warm mustard oil and mix it with camphor powder, then massage onto the chest area for approximately 15 minutes. Another option is to make tea from the Chinese herb, *Ginkgo biloba*.

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