

[IMAGE]

## **Nutritional Tips on Avoiding Hay Fever**

If you're sneezing day after day, even when you don't have a cold, hay fever may be the cause. But don't worry, because there is a potential solution to your problem: Recent research suggests that certain fatty acids and antioxidants are more likely to contribute to hay fever than previously thought.

Dr. Gabriele Nagel and colleagues gathered data from 334 adults with hay fever, and 1,336 adults without hay fever, and noted the amount of fatty acids and antioxidants consumed by members of each subject group. Those consuming large amounts of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA, an omega-3 type fatty acid) were less likely to suffer from hay fever. On the other hand, those consuming oleic acid (the most common fatty acid, typically in olive oil) nearly tripled subjects' chances of having hay fever.

Similarly, protective results were seen in diets rich in vitamin E, although high beta-carotene (vitamin A) intake appeared to increase the risk for hay fever. Some fatty acids are converted into substances that can inhibit wheezing, sneezing or other allergic symptoms. Yet since the process is not completely understood, science is not quite ready to recommend cutting down or adding to one's diet.

While study results don't warrant avoiding certain foods definitively, and you may not personally be ready to stock up on EPA or olive oil, or stop consuming carrots, it's a good idea in general to pay attention to what you consume.

And doing something about that smoking habit, if you have one, couldn't hurt, either: Smoking is a proven risk factor for hay fever and other allergic conditions.

### *Reference:*

Nagel G, Nieters A, Becker N, Linseisen J. The influence of the dietary intake of fatty acids and antioxidants on hay fever in adults. *Allergy* December 2003;58(12):1277-1284.

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