


18 allergy-busting supplements you should take, and 10 things you need to avoid to survive this allergy season



Congratulations, survivors of Winter 2016-17! It seems like it's been an interminably cold spring, but you've made it. The Freeze has lifted, but wait! A new menace threatens—Spring Allermageddon!

Spring blossoms will soon adorn our trees, and our cars and patios will be coated with a dusting of yellowish-green pollen. For spring allergy sufferers, that means itchy, burning red eyes, scratchy throats, sneezing, wheezing, coughing, and sinus congestion. 

Prescription and over-the-counter medications can suppress symptoms temporarily, but side effects abound, and they don't get to the root of the problem. Thankfully, there are plenty of natural remedies that can help.

Before I list my favorite natural products for allergy, a few general caveats:

PASS ON THE PIZZA: When pollen comes on like gangbusters, your allergy "cup" runneth over, so to speak. Low-grade chronic allergies to dairy and gluten, often quiescent during the deep-freeze, may contribute to overload when seasonal allergens make their appearance. Many of my patients report their allergy symptoms are better when they eliminate potential food allergens, and I find the same is true for me.

HOP ON THE WAGON: Beer, wine and liquor contain histamine, produced by yeast and bacteria during the fermentation process. If you're going to imbibe, clear distilled alcohols such as vodka and gin seem better-tolerated, but only in moderation.

SKIP THE SUGAR: Sugar promotes yeast overgrowth, which triggers allergic symptoms.

AVOID HISTAMINE TRIGGERS: In addition to wine and beer, a host of foods boost histamine, resulting in histamine intolerance.

GET SOME (REALLY) FRESH AIR: No, not the outdoors kind. During the couple of weeks when spring pollens peak, cloister yourself inside with the air conditioner on (provided its mechanical innards are mold- and dust-free) and consider getting a HEPA filter for your bedroom to pull indoor allergens out of circulation. And make sure air fresheners and detergent and fabric softener fragrances aren't adding to your nose woes. **GIVE YOUR HOUSE A CHECKUP!** Frequently, hidden source of mold, or VOCs from new carpets or furniture, can be allergy triggers.

BE BORN IN A MANGER: Maybe too late for you but interesting nonetheless: Studies show that kids who are born on farms and grow up playing in the dirt with animals have fewer allergies as they age.

AVOID ANTIBIOTICS: Studies show that frequent use in childhood ups the risk for asthma and other allergic disorders.

DRINK OOLONG TEA: I credit Dr. Leo Galland with this suggestion. He states that in laboratory studies, the catechins found in oolong tea were shown to inhibit allergic reactions.

TRY “IMMUNE BALANCE SOUP”: Another of Dr. Galland’s tips from his book *The Allergy Solution*. Sauté three cups of sliced carrots in three tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil for 10 minutes. Add one cup of chopped parsley, two cups of chopped scallions (green parts only), 12 ounces of chopped broccoli, three ounces of chopped baby kale, one teaspoon of turmeric powder and one-quarter teaspoon of ground black pepper. Add salt to taste. Cook and stir for one minute. Add 12 cups of water, and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Add one tablespoon of shredded daikon radish just before serving.

Now that we’ve gotten all of that squared away, here are my **Top 18 Allergy-Fighting Products**:

1. **QUERCETIN:** Known to inhibit mast cells from releasing pro-inflammatory compounds that cause allergy symptoms. *Dosage: 500 mg 3 times daily.*
2. **BROMELAIN:** A proteolytic enzyme extracted from pineapple, it stops the allergic cascade and reduces swelling and edema of tissue. *Dosage: 500 mg 3 times daily.*
3. **URTICA DIOICA (Stinging Nettle):** Randomized, double-blind studies have shown it to be as effective as standard allergy medications. *Dosage: 200 mg 3 times daily.*
4. **NAC (N-acetyl cysteine):** In Europe, it’s a prescription medicine, used for reducing congestion and for thinning tenacious mucus. *Dosage: 200 mg 3 times daily.* (NOTE: A supplement called **D-HIST**, available in the Hoffman Center store, conveniently combines all four of the previous ingredients, plus vitamin C)
5. **OMEGA-3 FISH OIL:** EPA offers anti-inflammatory protection. *Dosage: 1,000 mg 3 times daily.*
6. **VITAMIN C:** Nature’s own antihistamine. *Dosage: 500 mg 3 times daily.*
7. **VITAMIN D:** Emerging research suggests a protective role of vitamin D against asthma, eczema, and other allergic conditions.
8. **BUTTERBUR (Petadolex):** Also a popular migraine remedy, good research supports its anti-leukotriene effects. European studies have shown it to be as effective as the popular allergy drug Zyrtec. *Dosage: 50 mg 3 times daily.*
9. **PROBIOTICS:** A recent study shows that a probiotic drink (Yakult) containing *Lactobacillus casei* relieves allergic symptoms. Restoring proper balance of bacteria in the GI tract helps to rein in over-exuberant immune responses.
10. **PYCNOGENOL:** One of the more well-studied of the natural bioflavonoids, this extract of French maritime pine bark was found to relieve allergic rhinitis symptoms. *Dosage: 50-100 mg twice daily.*
11. **MSM (methylsulfonylmethane):** May block allergic reactions at the tissue level. *Dosage: 1 gram 3 times daily*
12. **ADRENAL SUPPORT:** Since the adrenals mediate the body’s resistance to allergic challenge, supporting cortisol production with licorice, pantothenic acid, adrenal cortical extract, ashwagandha and other adaptogens can relieve symptoms. Popular adrenal support supplements contain various proportions of

these and other ingredients.

13. **TRANSFER FACTOR:** Allergies exemplify imbalanced immune responses; Transfer Factor from colostrum restores normal TH1/TH2 ratios which enables the body to better distinguish between “friend” and “foe.” *Dosage: 250-500 mg twice daily.*
14. **SULFORAPHANE:** This potent derivative of broccoli or broccoli sprouts has been shown to **counteract allergies** worsened by air pollution.
15. **APIGENIN:** Found in parsley, celery, and certain spices, apigenin triggers the **switching of the immune response** to allergens toward a T-helper type 1 (Th1) profile.
16. **LUTEOLIN:** A strong histamine blocker, luteolin is found in the perilla plant. It may also have **neuro-protective effects**, which we discussed in a recent podcast with Dr. Theoharis Theoharides.
17. **XLEAR:** Bacteria and fungi that colonize the nasal passage and hide in biofilms are recognized as foreign invaders; their presence triggers chronic hyper-activation of the cells lining the respiratory tract. Xylitol in Xlear nasal spray inhibits microbes and dissolves biofilms, resulting in clearance of mucus.
18. **SIMILISAN eye drops:** A gentle homeopathic formula for itchy red eyes.

Get a jump on allergy season by starting supplementation early, before symptoms begin; stop the allergic cascade before it gets out of control. Here's to a healthy, allergy-free spring!