

# Holistic Medicine for Treating, Preventing, and Curing



*Selfcare for your optimal health*

## ALLERGY CONTROL ELIMINATE THE REASON FOR YOUR SNEEZIN'

by

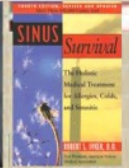
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## ELIMINATE THE REASON FOR YOUR SNEEZIN'

By Dr. Rob Ivker

My initiation into the world of respiratory disease occurred in the summer of 1952, when at the age of 5 I developed severe hay fever. The allergy to ragweed pollen left me almost incapacitated. In addition to the sneezing, itching, drippy, and stuffed up nose, I felt extremely tired and my eyes were so sensitive to sunlight that I couldn't open them outdoors. And indoors it was also a struggle to keep my eyes open due to the terribly sedating antihistamine prescribed by my physician father. I usually went to sleep after taking one. Unfortunately in the early 50's this was the only available option for symptom relief, and that's generally been the case until the 1980's, with the introduction of less sedating antihistamines or steroid nasal sprays to escape the misery of most cases of seasonal hay fever, or ***pollen allergy***. For me, the allergy symptoms would recur every year in late August and persist until late September or the first frost.

I, like many millions of pollen allergy or hay fever sufferers, learned to dread particular seasons of the year. My late summer/early fall ragweed pollen allergy followed the two other major pollen seasons. Early spring – March/April – the air fills with tree pollen; and late spring/early summer – May/June – is the grass pollen season. If your allergy symptoms tend to be seasonal then you are probably one of nearly 30 million Americans who suffer with hay fever, or ***seasonal*** allergic rhinitis as it's called in the medical profession. To protect yourself from the inflammatory effects of the pollen, it is helpful to use the following during your allergy season:

- a good HEPA air cleaner
- an effective nasal irrigator (SinuPulse® -- a pulsatile irrigation device)
- an air conditioner
- non-sedating antihistamines (either Rx or OTC) or “natural antihistamines” (grape seed extract, stinging nettles, quercetin, homeopathic allergy remedies)

However, there are also many allergy sufferers whose symptoms are year-round, a condition called **perennial** allergic rhinitis, caused by something other than (or in addition to) pollen, such as dust mites, mold, cats, dogs, and food.

**Dust mites** thrive wherever dust collects in a house. They leave droppings about the size of a pollen grain and are just as easy to inhale. The mites prefer the warm, humid climates of coastal cities—New Orleans is high on the list of offenders in the United States—but they are rare in cities above 6,000 feet, where the air is dry. If you suspect dust mites then I suggest:

- cleaning your carpets regularly with a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter or use vacuum cleaner bags with 1-micron or smaller pores;
- cleaning your carpets professionally using environmentally-sensitive cleaning agents, and a method that does not utilize steam.

**Mold** spores can be found on food, leather, furniture, and especially in dark, damp areas such as bathrooms, basements, refrigerators, and air conditioners. Outdoors, they can grow on crops, grass, and dead leaves. There can be hundreds of thousands of mold spores per cubic meter of air, and we inhale about 10 to 12 cubic meters of air each day. Unfortunately these spores cause significant allergic reactions in millions of susceptible people. If you suspect a problem with mold I recommend you have your home inspected by a mold remediation expert (you can find one by referring to the Indoor Air Quality Association website ([www.iaqa.org](http://www.iaqa.org))).

About 25 percent of allergy sufferers are allergic to **cats**. The offending substance is the cat's saliva, which is left on their fur during preening. Homes with cats can be so full of cat hair and dander that it can take up to six months after the cat is removed before it can be considered safe for someone who is allergic to cats. If you'd rather not part with your cat, it can be quite helpful to

bathe the cat monthly. Within three to eight months the cat will stop making the offending allergen in its saliva, and you will have created a non-allergenic cat.

There are a multitude of **foods** that can cause allergy symptoms. Surveys have shown that as many as 70 percent of Americans believe they are allergic to at least one particular food. Yet, a food allergy may be one of the most under-diagnosed conditions in this country because scientific testing has been inaccurate, expensive, and it requires carefully informed patients and technicians. If you suspect a food allergy, then I would suggest a *food-elimination diet* to confirm the diagnosis. Eliminate from your diet for at least three weeks the foods that are most likely to produce nasal allergy symptoms: wheat and other gluten grains (e.g. rye and oats), cow's milk and all dairy products, chocolate, corn, oranges, eggs, and artificial food coloring. After that, begin to introduce each of these foods into your diet at the rate of one every three days. It should be obvious to you which foods cause your nose to react. Another method for detecting food allergies is to take your pulse in the morning on an empty stomach. Count your heartbeat for a full minute. Then eat the food you wish to test. Wait 15 to 30 minutes, then retake your pulse. If your heart rate has increased by 15 to 20 beats per minute, chances are that you are sensitive to the food you ate.

Allergy *skin tests* are medicine's most definitive method of diagnosing the cause of allergic rhinitis from airborne substances such as pollen, animal dander, etc. They involve injecting bits of suspected allergens in different places under the skin, or applying them to scratches on the arm or the back. If a particular area swells, reddens, and itches, the patient is usually allergic to that substance. If you are found to be sensitive to one or more specific allergens, then *allergy desensitization shots* are often recommended. I've found these shots are not always effective but their greatest benefit seems to be with pollen allergy sufferers.

Most physicians agree that allergies result from a hyper-reactive or aberrant functioning of the immune system, and that they tend to run in families. But there is no mention within the medical community of an emotional component contributing to or triggering allergies, nor is there any explanation for the tremendous increase in the number of allergy sufferers in the past thirty years. My “sandpaper” theory holds that as we breathe polluted and particulate-laden air 23,000 times a day, we are causing chronic irritation (“rubbing the surface raw”) and inflammation of the nasal mucous membrane. This creates a hyper-reactive membrane that, given the right genetic predisposition, emotional stress, and adequate exposure to an allergen, can precipitate a lifetime of allergies. The holistic medical treatment for allergies – the *Love Your Nose Program* – is focused on healing the mucous membrane by reducing inflammation, along with restoring balance or strengthening the immune system.

Using this holistic approach for the past 20 years, I was able to cure my chronic sinusitis, and I’m also thrilled to report that I’m free of allergies too. I now look forward to the late summer season with pleasure rather than dread.

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