Natural Allergy Remedies

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These remedies are not intended to diagnose, treat, or cure any disease, nor are the views expressed by Tieraona Low Dog, MD intended to be a substitute for any form of medical services. If you or a family member has a medical problem, or if you suspect that you or a family member has a medical problem, promptly contact your health care provider.
Looking for a natural approach for soothing the symptoms of seasonal allergies? **Butterbur** (Petasites hybridus) has been used for centuries to relieve symptoms associated with seasonal allergies such as cough, congestion, and asthma.

Butterbur contains compounds that reduce smooth muscle constriction in the lungs and shrink swollen nasal membranes, providing strong clinical evidence for its historical uses. In fact, butterbur has been shown to be as effective as leading allergy medications and decrease the duration, number, and severity of asthma attacks without sedating effects.

Purchase a product standardized to provide 7.5 milligrams petasin per 50 milligrams of extract and free of pyrrolizidine alkaloids. Take 1 capsule morning and night (100 milligrams total per day). Children 6 to 9 years should take 25 milligrams twice a day, while children 9 to 13 take 50 milligrams twice a day.

Be careful to choose a quality supplement: the plant contains unsaturated pyrrolizidine alkaloids fully known to be hepatotoxic. Pyrrolizidine alkaloids, or PA, can be found in all parts of the plant, but it is possible to lower a supplement’s PA content with a different manufacturing process. My suggestion would be to look for brands that have been approved in Canada, where they monitor PA content in butterbur products. If you are a regular butterbur user, check your resources and watch for signs of hepatotoxicity such as dark urine, stomach pain, fever, or unusual tiredness.
When we have an allergic reaction to something, "mast cells" degranulate, which means they release histamine and other chemicals that cause your nose to get stuffy, your eyes to itch, and in more severe cases, the smooth muscle in your lungs to constrict. A natural compound called quercetin, found in many plants, including citrus fruits, dark berries, and red wine, has been shown to stabilize the membranes of mast cells and to reduce the release of histamine.

Although eating more of these foods in your diet might help, I've found quercetin to be very useful if taken regularly at the start of the allergy season if you really suffer from allergies. The dose is generally 500 milligrams twice a day.

Note: Although considered safe, the use of quercetin in pregnancy, particularly at these doses, is not recommended.
Stinging Nettle

The dreaded "stinging" nettle (Urtica dioica) can pack quite a punch if you rub up against it while out hiking. However, cooking, drying or making an extract from nettles turns the leaves sting-free! Researchers have found that compounds within nettle leaves inhibit the release of histamine, which causes nasal swelling and itching.

A randomized trial of nearly 100 people found that taking 600 milligrams a day of freeze-dried nettle was more effective than placebo for relieving the majority of allergy symptoms. Forty-eight percent of the participants stated that nettles equaled or surpassed previous medications that they had taken for seasonal allergies in terms of effectiveness.

You can purchase freeze-dried nettles in capsules. The dose is 300 milligrams 2 to 3 times daily. If you live where nettles grow, you can wear gloves and carefully gather them. Let them wilt overnight. Then tincture them in the morning.

Nettle leaf is useful for mild allergies. If you’re really struggling, consider taking nettle leaf with quercetin. Quercetin is a bioflavonoid compound that is found in many fruits and vegetables, including onions, kale, tomatoes, broccoli, green beans, berries, and apples. Quercetin works best when taken continuously during allergy season.

You can purchase freeze-dried nettles in capsules. Dose is 300 mg of two to three times per day. You can also drink the tea a couple times per day. For quercetin: the dose is 400-500 mg of a coated tablet twice a day between meals is typical. Nettle leaf is very safe, consumed as a food and used as an herbal remedy. Safety of quercetin in pregnancy has not been well-studied. Talk to your doctor or midwife before using.
T'S HOMEMADE NASAL SALINE

While there are numerous prescription, over-the-counter, and natural remedies for allergies, don't forget how effective saline nasal washes can be! You can purchase pre-made saline solutions or make your own!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/4 tsp. non-iodized kosher salt
- 1/8 tsp. baking soda
- 8 ounces boiled or distilled water
- Clean jar for solution

DIRECTIONS:

1) Mix water with salt and baking soda.
2) Stir well until salt and soda have dissolved. Use at room temperature.
3) Make fresh daily with a neti-pot in the shower or over a drain.

Washing out the nasal passages removes pollen, dander and dust reducing symptoms and a review of studies found people who do this simple practice have a 62% reduction in their medicine consumption. I recommend non-iodized kosher salt because iodine can be potentially allergenic, and sea salt can contain algae and other contaminants. Use boiled or distilled water when making your saline solution. Try it once a day for two weeks and see if you notice a difference. After a successful trial, use the saline solution 3-4 times per week for fast and lasting relief.