



# BEATING YOUR ALLERGIES NATURALLY

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## ACUPUNCTURE

Evidence suggests that acupuncture is a useful complementary or alternative treatment option for people with allergic rhinitis. In one study that included 45 people with hay fever, acupuncture was as effective as antihistamine therapy in improving symptoms and the beneficial effects appeared to last longer. Research published in the journal *Allergy*<sup>1</sup>, has shown that acupuncture is an effective way to reduce symptoms of allergic rhinitis such as a runny nose and itchy eyes.

Treatment for allergic rhinitis may include needling and moxibustion (a technique in which heat from the burning of an herb called mugwort [*Artemisia vulgaris*] enhances the therapeutic effect of the acupuncture needles).

The stimulation of acupuncture points promotes the body's natural healing abilities, strengthens the body's resistance and regulates the body's reaction to antigens. Points commonly used are points on the lung meridian located near the wrist and points located over the sinuses to reduce nasal secretion. Treatment is very effective, with results achieved within a short time. After the first treatment, nasal congestion, discharge and itching are relieved. Typically, a course of six treatments is required to give a lasting relief from hay fever symptoms. Some people may remain free of hay fever for years after six treatments, while others may need to visit the acupuncturist every year prior to hay fever season.

## ELIMINATE FOOD IRRITANTS

If you are prone to allergic reactions, including hay fever, you can very often have a reaction to certain foods - typically grain (gluten) and dairy foods, which, like pollen, contain grass proteins. Eliminating dairy and wheat from the diet completely for two weeks can help you see if this makes a difference. Instead of cows' milk, try soya or rice milk and switch to eating grains, such as rice and corn, and gluten-free bread. You may find that by avoiding these foods during the summer, you are less likely to get hay fever.

## MAXIMISE YOUR GUT HEALTH

Trials in Finland found that children born to mothers who suffered from hay fever and asthma were less likely to develop allergies if they took supplements of probiotic bacteria such as acidophilus. Eating live yoghurts containing probiotic bacteria plus apples, vegetables and whole grains can help the vital bacteria to flourish.

## LIVER DETOX

The liver removes many of the body's major toxins and affects allergies. Without embarking on a detox programme, some easy steps to boost your liver function include cutting out alcohol, smoking and caffeine. A glass of water containing freshly squeezed lemon each morning will help. Antioxidants and vitamins found in fresh fruits and vegetables will reduce liver inflammation and boost immune function.

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<sup>1</sup> Brinkhaus, B., Hummelsberger, J., Kohlen, R., Seufert, J., Hempen, C.-H., Leonhardy, H., Nögel, R., Joos, S., Hahn, E. & Schuppan, D. (2004) - Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine in the treatment of patients with seasonal allergic rhinitis: a randomized-controlled clinical trial. - *Allergy* 59 (9), 953-960. - doi: 10.1111/ - j.1398-9995.2004.00540.x