



## News & Information

Allergies	Pg 1-3
It's not just you. Here's why pollen allergies are worse than ever	Pg 3-6
Natural Allergy Relief: 12 Remedies to Try	Pg 6-13
Nasal or Sinus Rinse Recipe and Uses	Pg 14-16
The 10 Best Herbs for Allergies	Pg 16-23
May Class Option	Pg 23

# Allergies

Mayo Clinic

## Overview

Allergies occur when your immune system reacts to a foreign substance — such as pollen, bee venom or pet dander — or a food that doesn't cause a reaction in most people.

Your immune system produces substances known as antibodies. When you have allergies, your immune system makes antibodies that identify a particular allergen as harmful, even though it isn't. When you come into contact with the allergen, your immune system's reaction can inflame your skin, sinuses, airways or digestive system.

The severity of allergies varies from person to person and can range from minor irritation to anaphylaxis — a potentially life-threatening emergency. While most allergies can't be cured, treatments can help relieve your allergy symptoms.

## Symptoms

Allergy symptoms, which depend on the substance involved, can affect your airways, sinuses and nasal passages, skin, and digestive system. Allergic reactions can range from mild to severe. In some severe cases, allergies can trigger a life-threatening reaction known as anaphylaxis.

**Hay fever**, also called allergic rhinitis, can cause:

- Sneezing
- Itching of the nose, eyes or roof of the mouth
- Runny, stuffy nose
- Watery, red or swollen eyes (conjunctivitis)

**A food allergy** can cause:

- Tingling in the mouth
- Swelling of the lips, tongue, face or throat
- Hives
- Anaphylaxis

**An insect sting allergy** can cause:

- A large area of swelling (edema) at the sting site
- Itching or hives all over the body
- Cough, chest tightness, wheezing or shortness of breath
- Anaphylaxis

**A drug allergy** can cause:

- Hives
- Itchy skin
- Rash
- Facial swelling
- Wheezing
- Anaphylaxis

**Atopic dermatitis**, an allergic skin condition also called eczema, can cause skin to:

- Itch
- Redden
- Flake or peel

## **Anaphylaxis**

Some types of allergies, including allergies to foods and insect stings, can trigger a severe reaction known as anaphylaxis. A life-threatening medical emergency, anaphylaxis can cause you to go into shock. Signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis include:

- Loss of consciousness
- A drop in blood pressure
- Severe shortness of breath
- Skin rash
- Lightheadedness
- A rapid, weak pulse
- Nausea and vomiting

## When to see a doctor

You might see your health care provider if you have symptoms you think are caused by an allergy, and nonprescription allergy medications don't provide enough relief. If you have symptoms after starting a new medication, call the provider who prescribed it right away.

**For a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis),** call 911 or your local emergency number or seek emergency medical help. If you carry an epinephrine auto-injector (Auvi-Q, EpiPen, others), give yourself a shot right away.

Even if your symptoms improve after an epinephrine injection, you should go to the emergency department to make sure symptoms don't return when the effects of the injection wear off.

If you've had a severe allergy attack or any signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis in the past, make an appointment to see your health care provider. Evaluation, diagnosis and long-term management of anaphylaxis are complicated, so you'll probably need to see a provider who specializes in allergies and immunology.

# It's not just you. Here's why pollen allergies are worse than ever

By Brenda Goodman, CNN

Published 6:27 AM EDT, Thu April 4, 2024



Warming temperatures mean trees bloom earlier, pollen season lasts longer and pollen grains are more likely to provoke your sinuses

For roughly 1 in 4 American adults, spring blooms mark the start of itchy, eye-watering, congested misery.

And looked at any number of ways, it's only getting worse: Experts agree that more people are becoming allergic to airborne irritants like pollen and mold, allergy symptoms are more severe, and allergy seasons are lasting longer than ever.

You may also feel the increasing pollen burden even if you don't have hay fever, as studies show that pollen perturbs the immune system even if it doesn't inflame your airways.

If you're already feeling it, you're not alone.

## **Blame climate change**

Scientists say intensified seasonal allergies are among the first wave of anticipated health impacts from global warming, along with greater exposure to infectious diseases.

Recent studies have revealed that growing zones in the US are shifting as the climate warms, allowing plants and trees to expand their ranges. Rising temperatures are also allowing plants to bloom earlier and longer, prolonging pollen seasons. Increased rainfall means plants release more pollen when they bloom, and higher numbers of thunderstorms cause pollen grains to burst, making them more irritating and worsening symptoms.

Shifting wind patterns in some parts of the world are carrying pollen over longer distances, too.



“At least in some areas of the world, pollen is being distributed more widely. And people are being potentially exposed to different types of pollen that they weren't before,” said Dr. Mary Margaret Johnson, a principal research scientist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health who studies the health effects of climate change.

There's some evidence that increases in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are making pollen more potent, too.

Researchers in South Korea grew oak trees in special chambers where they could control the amount of carbon dioxide in the air surrounding the plants, and they adjusted the carbon dioxide level to match the projected concentration in the year 2050. The trees were planted in September 2009. Eight years later, they bloomed, and researchers collected the pollen they produced and studied it.

“And what they found was that there are literally billions more pollen grains that are produced,” said Lewis Ziska, an associate professor of environmental health sciences at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. That pollen also seemed to be more allergenic.

“The protein on the exine – the outer shell of the the pollen – those proteins that cause your immune system to respond are increasing,” he said, noting that his research group had seen the same phenomenon in ragweed plants.

Beyond more potent pollen, the sheer quantities of it may be causing a problem. Experts think more exposure to pollen equals more chances to be sensitized, which equals more allergies.

According to the market research website market.us, global sales of antihistamines, the medications that reduce allergy symptoms, are set to more than double over the next decade as more people turn to pharmacy shelves for relief.

## **Allergists are staying busy**

Over the past three decades, Dr. Joseph Inglefield III says he’s seen spring allergies kick off earlier each year.

“It’s at least a month earlier than it used to be,” said Inglefield, an allergist who owns Hickory Allergy and Asthma in Hickory, North Carolina.

This is the second year in a row with lots of rain in that region but no snow, Inglefield says, a climate pattern that’s a recipe for heavy spring pollen concentrations.

“We got pollen counts that were high in February, which is unusual,” he said.



A recent study that analyzed pollen counts across the US for the past 30 years, along with temperature fluctuations over the same time frame, points to why. It found a strong correlation between temperature and allergy season severity.

As the weather has warmed, pollen season has started about 20 days earlier and lasted eight days longer. There’s also been about 20% more pollen produced annually, mostly due to trees cranking out more of the yellow-green stuff. The study authors found the trends accelerating over time, with the biggest increases in the most recent years.

The trends get more pronounced as you go north.

“What we’re seeing is, as you move toward the poles, that things are warming up faster,” Ziska said.

So someone in Illinois, for example, might be seeing bigger changes in pollen than somebody in Texas – although Texas gets blasted with pollen, too.

Inglefield says that mirrors what he’s seeing in his patients, who tell him that their allergies are more severe than ever and that they need more medications to manage them.



“That’s a very common experience,” he said.

## More bad news

The bad news for allergy sufferers doesn’t stop there. Dr. Leonard Bielory, an allergist and professor of medicine at the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine in New Jersey, said he and his colleagues looked at the sensitization of the US population to various allergens over time and found that the number of different allergens that people are sensitive to has doubled over the past 25 years.

Climate may be playing a role in the rise of allergies, Bielory says, but it could be more than that, too.

“Everybody wants to say it’s climate per se, but it also could be a microbiome issue,” he says. Changes to the microbiome – the bacterial populations that live on our skin and in our gut – may be changing how our bodies respond to pollen when they first encounter it, priming the immune system to react.

If you’re someone who isn’t getting enough help from allergy medications anymore or you find yourself using a rescue inhaler often, it might be time to consider some kind of immunotherapy, which helps calm the immune system and keep it from reacting so strongly to your triggers, Inglefield said.

There are tablets now for grass, ragweed and dust mites, but if trees are the culprit, allergy shots are the only way to go.

“Really, that’s probably the most effective thing you can do at this point,” Inglefield said.

“What that does is, that may not help you this season, but it will help you next spring, so you won’t have as much trouble,” he said.

# Natural Allergy Relief: 12 Remedies to Try

By Cathy Wong

Updated on November 12, 2023

Medically reviewed by Meredith Bull, ND

Natural remedies for allergies can include herbal preparations, teas, nasal sprays, and even acupuncture. For some of these (like black cumin seed oil), there is limited scientific research to indicate they may help reduce allergy attacks or provide relief from symptoms.

Allergies can impact your quality of life, so it's understandable to be interested in any treatment that might relieve symptoms. But if you're considering a natural remedy, run the idea by your healthcare provider first, as some may pose notable risks.

## Supplement

Supplements aren't always tested for quality, and safety for people with certain medical conditions or medications isn't always certain. Speak to your healthcare provider about supplement use. Keep in mind that natural remedies for allergies are not effective in the event of an emergency such as anaphylaxis, a life-threatening allergic reaction.

This article discusses 12 different natural remedies for allergies. It looks at what research shows, how these remedies can be used, and what the side effects may be.

## Exercise

Regular exercise may be one of the most effective ways to help decrease allergic reactions, including respiratory allergies (related to breathing), although it isn't quite clear why. In moderation, exercise isn't harmful to people who have allergies and, of course, offers many health benefits.

### What the Research Shows

One study looked at the effects of cold-weather exercise on adults with respiratory allergies. The participants took part in a four-hour hiking/snowshoeing tour or a day of skiing in moderately cold alpine conditions.

Results showed that they had decreased allergy symptoms and an improvement in breathing tests. These effects were noted both the day after exercise and 60 days later.<sup>1</sup>

### How to Use It

People with allergies can follow the exercise recommendations for the general population. This includes at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week.<sup>2</sup> These activities include walking, running, cycling, treadmill exercise, swimming, and more.

### Warnings and Side Effects

Discuss your exercise plans with your healthcare provider (especially if you also have asthma or exercise-induced asthma). Adhere to any medical restrictions you may have. It's wise to gradually increase your exercise as you build your endurance.

In addition, if you have pollen allergies, take note of pollen levels before heading outside.

## Nasal Irrigation

Nasal irrigation, also called nasal rinse or saline lavage, is often used by people who have allergies with respiratory symptoms. It is an at-home remedy that involves using sterile saltwater to clear nasal passages.

### What the Research Shows

Research suggests nasal irrigation can help reduce allergy symptoms, facilitating breathing and sleep.<sup>3</sup>

### How Irrigation Is Used

You can perform nasal irrigation daily, or even several times a day, to relieve symptoms of congestion. You can try a nasal rinse by purchasing a kit and following instructions.

One method is to use a neti pot with a saline solution. You pour the solution from the pot in one nostril and the solution drains from the other nostril. A squeeze bottle or bulb syringe can also be used.

A nasal rinse may sometimes be performed in the hospital during an inpatient admission, especially for young children with severe respiratory reactions.

Nasal or Sinus Rinse Recipe and Uses

### Warnings and Side Effects

Only use distilled water or boiled water for nasal irrigation. There have been rare cases of amoeba infection due to the use of contaminated tap water in nasal irrigation.<sup>4</sup> Also, be sure to clean the device after each use.

It's best to wait an hour or more after nasal irrigation before going to bed. That ensures the saline has drained completely from your sinuses and helps to prevent coughing.

## Vitamin C

There's no clear evidence as yet that vitamin C, despite its reputation in fighting off the common cold, can benefit people with allergy symptoms. Vitamin C is known as an antioxidant, with properties that may boost the immune system and limit inflammation.<sup>5</sup>

### What the Research Shows

Research suggests inflammation contributes to allergy symptoms and reducing the inflammation can help symptoms to improve.<sup>6</sup> Some studies of vitamin C have shown improvement in itching, runny nose, and other symptoms when given intravenously (by IV) at high doses.<sup>7</sup>

However, study results have been mixed, with stronger evidence for a role in treating asthma with vitamin C than allergic rhinitis (even though the two often occur together).<sup>8</sup>

### How Vitamin C Is Used

Vitamin C is available from a number of food sources, including citrus fruits, peppers, and berries.<sup>9</sup> Tablets, capsules, lozenges, and other products are readily available, including topical (skin) lotions and ointments.

### Warnings and Side Effects

Vitamin C is generally safe but side effects at high doses can include diarrhea and other digestive system issues. It may lead to higher levels of iron absorption in people with a rare disorder called hereditary hemochromatosis. Ask your healthcare provider about drug interactions if you are receiving chemotherapy treatment.<sup>9</sup>

## Vitamin D

Vitamin D deficiency has been linked to allergies, including allergic rhinitis (nasal congestion), allergic asthma, eczema, and anaphylaxis.<sup>10</sup> This vitamin has a role in regulating immune system cells and the release of chemicals that can produce allergy symptoms.

### What the Research Shows

Several studies suggest vitamin D supplements may reduce inflammation and allergic reactions.

One study showed that vitamin D-deficient participants taking vitamin D supplements along with antihistamines (allergy medications) had improved allergy symptoms after eight weeks.<sup>11</sup>

There is no evidence, however, that taking vitamin D without medication would have the same effect. And it isn't clear whether taking supplements is helpful for people who already have optimal levels of vitamin D.

Another study found that response to allergy immunotherapy (allergy shots) in relieving allergic rhinitis was better in subjects with optimal vitamin D levels. The response was worse in those who were deficient in vitamin D.<sup>12</sup>

### How Vitamin D Is Used

If you have been diagnosed as vitamin D deficient, your healthcare provider will recommend the supplements you need. Few foods offer vitamin D (apart from its addition to milk and fortified cereals) but it is available through supplements and sun exposure.

The United States recommended dietary allowances for vitamin D vary by age. Adults up to age 70 need 600 international units (IU) of vitamin D daily. Those aged 70 and older should get 800 IU of vitamin D daily.



## Warnings and Side Effects

It is possible to take too much vitamin D, which raises calcium levels in the blood. This can result in kidney stones and calcium deposits in the heart and other organs.<sup>13</sup>

Exposure to sunlight also raises vitamin D levels. However, you should avoid too much exposure since it can lead to sunburn or skin cancer.

## Honey

Honey is made from flower nectar in beehives. It has been linked to a number of health benefits, including immune system benefits.<sup>14</sup>

### What the Research Shows

Some studies suggest that honey may reduce inflammation, which could relieve inflamed airways and make it easier to breathe.<sup>15</sup> A 2018 study of nasal spray that contains honey found it offered benefits when used along with other treatments (like antihistamines) for allergic rhinitis symptoms.<sup>16</sup>

### How Honey Is Used

Honey is often mixed into tea, foods, or even taken by the spoonful. Capsules, tablets, and chewable gummies are available as supplements. Nasal sprays are an option, too.

Propolis is a sticky component of honey that may help to relieve allergy symptoms. It has been shown to offer benefits in reducing allergic symptoms in asthma.<sup>17</sup> It's available as an oral supplement (lozenges, capsules) but some products can be applied to the skin.

## Warnings and Side Effects

It's not uncommon for some people to have allergies to honey. Avoid any propolis products if you have an allergy to bees.<sup>18</sup>

Keep in mind that honey has a high sugar content, which may present a risk to people with diabetes or other health conditions affected by sugar intake. It's also to be avoided in children less than 1 year old.<sup>19</sup>

## Acupuncture

The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Foundation recommends acupuncture as one way to treat allergic rhinitis.

Acupuncture is a healing practice that originated in China over 5,000 years ago. It involves stimulating points on the body with needles, pressure, or electrical probes. These points are believed to be connected by pathways creating an energy flow that affects overall health.

### What the Research Shows

Although acupuncture has been used for allergy treatment, there have been no large, randomized controlled trials to verify its effectiveness.

However, a large systematic review looked at several studies on the effects of acupuncture on allergic rhinitis. The results suggested acupuncture can improve nasal symptoms for people who have allergies, but the reason for this improvement wasn't clear. The procedure was found to be safe and without adverse effects.<sup>21</sup>

### How Acupuncture Is Used

Acupuncture is often used as a complementary therapy in addition to conventional allergy treatment. You would get a series of weekly or twice-weekly treatments for several weeks with an acupuncturist, and then follow-up treatments as needed.

## Warnings and Side Effects

Acupuncture is generally regarded as safe, and side effects are not expected. However, it is best to look for a practitioner who is licensed, certified, or registered as required by your state.

## Butterbur

The herb butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*) is a shrub-like plant that grows in northern Asia, Europe, and parts of North America. Extracts from the herb have been used in folk medicine for migraine headaches, stomach cramps, cough, allergic rhinitis, and asthma.<sup>22</sup>

### What the Research Shows

The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health says studies suggest root or leaf extracts of butterbur may help relieve allergic rhinitis. However, it has not been found to be useful for asthma or allergic skin reactions.<sup>22</sup>

### How Butterbur Is Used

Commercial butterbur extracts are made from the roots or leaves of the plant. They're available in capsule or tablet form to be taken by mouth. Some studies have shown a benefit when commercial butterbur supplements are taken twice daily.<sup>23</sup>

Check the label or speak to your healthcare provider about precise dosing.

### Warnings and Side Effects

Side effects of butterbur may include indigestion, headache, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and drowsiness. Butterbur is in the ragweed plant family. People who are allergic to ragweed, marigolds, daisies, or chrysanthemums should avoid butterbur and products that contain it.

Do not take the raw butterbur herb on its own or as a tea, extract, or capsule. It contains substances called pyrrolizidine alkaloids that can be toxic to the liver and lungs and may cause cancer.<sup>22</sup>

Women who are pregnant or nursing, children, and people with kidney or liver disease should not take butterbur in any form.

## Quercetin

Quercetin is an antioxidant, which helps prevent damage to cells. It reduces inflammatory cells and proteins, especially in skin.<sup>24</sup> It is found naturally in foods such as apples (with the skin on), berries, red grapes, red onions, capers, and black tea. It is also available in supplement form.

Some people use it for allergic rhinitis, atopic dermatitis (eczema), and asthma.

### What the Research Shows

In the lab, quercetin helps restrict the release of histamine, a chemical released by cells in allergic reactions. It can also inhibit the formation of IgE antibodies, another component of the allergic response.<sup>25</sup> Quercetin is chemically related to the existing anti-allergy drug cromolyn sodium.

Quercetin has potential for the development of allergy and asthma therapy. However, research has largely been limited to its effects in test tube or animal studies, without clinical studies of humans.<sup>25</sup>

There is some evidence that it may help reduce the effects of allergic skin reactions, such as atopic dermatitis.<sup>26</sup>

### How Quercetin Is Used

There are numerous dietary sources of quercetin. Quercetin is also available as a nutritional supplement in tablet or capsule form. A typical dose for allergies and hay fever is between 200 milligrams (mg) and 400 mg three times a day.

## Warnings and Side Effects

Quercetin should be avoided by people with kidney disease, as well as people who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

## Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids are essential fats. These are fats your body needs but can't make itself, so you need to get them from your diet. Foods that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids include fish, walnuts, vegetable oil, flax seeds, and leafy vegetables.

Research suggests that omega-3 fatty acids may reduce the production of inflammatory chemicals in the body, which play a role in allergies and asthma.<sup>27</sup>

## What the Research Shows

Omega-3 fatty acid supplements have been shown in research to reduce some of the effects of asthma and atopic dermatitis. However, many studies are on animal models or in the test tube, rather than human studies.<sup>28</sup>

Researchers are looking at whether taking omega-3 fish oil supplements when you're pregnant can reduce atopic dermatitis and food allergies in infants. There have been some positive findings, but this research is still very preliminary.<sup>29</sup>

## How Omega-3 Fatty Acid Are Used

Common sources of omega-3 fatty acids include the following:

- **Flaxseed oil:** 1 tablespoon two to three times a day
- **Walnuts:** 1 ounce (14 halves) a day
- **Fish oil capsules:** 1 to 1.2 grams of EPA and DHA per day

## Warnings and Side Effects

Side effects of fish oil may include indigestion and a fishy aftertaste. Fish oil has a mild "blood-thinning" effect. If you are taking Coumadin (warfarin) or heparin, or are at risk of bleeding complications, do not take fish oil without consulting a healthcare provider.<sup>30</sup> Fish oil should not be taken two weeks before or after surgery.

## Stinging Nettle

Stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) is an herb that may reduce the symptoms of allergic rhinitis. This natural remedy is thought by some to be one of the most effective herbal supplements for relieving allergy symptoms.

## What the Research Shows

One randomized double-blind clinical trial in humans found that stinging nettle seemed to reduce allergy symptoms.

There were some changes in clinical measures such as eosinophil counts (a type of white blood cell involved in allergic reactions) in nasal smears.<sup>31</sup> However, these are very preliminary findings, and more studies are needed.

## How Stinging Nettle Is Used

Stinging nettle can be used as a tea. Extracts may be found in a variety of supplements for allergy support.

## Warnings and Side Effects

Stinging nettle has diuretic properties, meaning it causes your kidneys to make more urine. It should not be used unless you consult your healthcare provider, especially if you are taking diuretics for fluid retention.<sup>32</sup>

## Probiotics and Prebiotics

Probiotics are live organisms, or "good" bacteria, that help improve the health of the digestive and immune systems.

Prebiotics are a type of fiber that encourages the growth of probiotic bacteria. Added to infant formula, they may help improve immune responses.

### What the Research Shows

Research has looked at whether probiotics during pregnancy and breastfeeding can reduce the risk of eczema in at-risk infants. The World Allergy Organization (WAO) says the evidence is limited for using probiotics for pregnant and breastfeeding women for allergy prevention. However, they still recommend probiotic use by those whose infants would be at high risk of developing an allergy. They also recommend probiotic use by those infants.<sup>33</sup>

The WAO also found that the evidence for using prebiotics is limited. However, for infants who are not exclusively breastfed, supplementing with prebiotics may be considered.<sup>34</sup>

They note there are no studies of prebiotic supplements for pregnant or breastfeeding women. Because of this, they make no recommendation for maternal use of prebiotics.

### How Probiotics and Are Prebiotics Used

Probiotics are available in a variety of forms, including supplemental drinks, kefir, yogurt, and capsules. Prebiotics are found in fermented foods. They are also available in tablets, capsules, and chewable products.

### Warnings and Side Effects

Probiotics and prebiotics are generally safe. But if you are sensitive to dairy products or other possible ingredients, check for sources that are safest for you.

## Black Cumin Seed Oil

Black cumin seed oil has several active chemical compounds, including thymoquinone. Research evidence suggests it may relieve symptoms of allergic rhinitis.<sup>35</sup>

### What the Research Shows

In one study, people with allergic rhinitis were exposed to black cumin seed oil by smelling it or rubbing it on the forehead. They found they had reduced nasal congestion, nasal itching, runny nose, and sneezing attacks.

Another study used black cumin seed oil in the form of nasal drops to treat allergic rhinitis. A six-week treatment course showed good results in relieving symptoms.<sup>36</sup>

### How It's Used

Black cumin seed oil is sold in capsules as well as in bulk oil form. It can be taken as a supplement once or twice a day. Or, as in the studies of rhinitis, it can be rubbed on the skin, smelled, or applied as nose drops.

### Warnings and Side Effects

Studies have found no significant side effects for black seed oil. However, there is always the possibility of a skin reaction when applied topically. Test a small amount on your skin before using it consistently. Continue to monitor your skin for reactions while using it for any length of time.

## Supplement Safety

Supplements aren't always tested for quality and are largely unregulated, so the content of a product may differ from what's listed on its label. Safety for certain individuals (e.g., nursing mothers, those taking medications, etc.) is also not established.

To ensure that what's on the label is indeed what you are getting, opt for supplements that have been voluntarily submitted for testing by an independent certifying body like U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP), ConsumerLab, or NSF International.

Brands certified organic by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) can also reduce your risk of exposure to unwanted chemicals and pesticides. Always talk to your healthcare provider before taking a supplement for allergies or any other concern.

## Lifestyle Tips

Allergy symptoms may be relieved with changes in your environment, including the use of a humidifier or an air purifier.

The moist, warm air from a humidifier can relieve nasal passages irritated by dry air. But check with your allergist before using one to talk about the potential risks, too. The additional moisture can promote dust mites, already the top cause of indoor allergies. It also can lead to mold spores.

Keeping the house at 40% to 50% humidity can help, along with ensuring that a humidifier is clean and the filter is changed frequently.<sup>37</sup> If not, the exposures can contribute to allergy symptoms.

Air purifiers also can remove allergens. A high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter will remove mold, dust, pollen, and other allergens from indoor air when used properly.<sup>38</sup>

Check with your healthcare provider about your specific allergies and other steps you can take to limit your exposure to allergens. They may include:<sup>39</sup>

- Staying hydrated; some studies suggest dehydration leads to or worsens allergy symptoms.
- Limiting stress
- Avoiding cold, dry air exposure

## Summary

Many types of natural remedies are thought to help ease allergy symptoms. These include exercise, nasal irrigation, probiotics, prebiotics, and various herbs and supplements.

For many of these, research is still limited on how they affect allergies. Talk with your doctor first to let them know your symptoms. They can help answer your questions about how natural treatments might work with your other allergy medications.





# Nasal or Sinus Rinse Recipe and Uses

By Daniel More, MD

Updated on April 01, 2023

Medically reviewed by Daniel More, MD

Fact checked by Nick Blackmer

Saline rinses are widely available over the counter at drugstores and online, or you can use a nasal and sinus rinse recipe (like the one found in this article) to make your own at home. These rinses are a drug-free way to treat and prevent sinus infections and allergic rhinitis (runny nose).

By rinsing the nasal passages with a salt-water solution, you can help rid the nose of allergens and thin out mucus. Sinus rinses can also prevent blockages and keep your sinuses clear.

This article discusses the purpose of nasal and sinus rinses. It offers step-by-step instructions on how to perform a nasal and sinus rinse, as well as a recipe for making your own rinse at home.

Valery Rizzo Collection / Getty Images

## Purpose of a Saline Rinse

Saline rinses help to prevent the crusting of secretions in the nasal passages, which may otherwise block the sinuses from draining. If the sinus drainage sites become blocked, which could also occur with swelling from allergies or irritants, a sinus infection may develop.

Saline rinses also serve to reduce tissue swelling in the nasal passages and improve the clearance of mucus.<sup>1</sup>

Various nasal saline rinse kits are available commercially, including the Sinus Rinse brand, which contains pre-mixed salt packages. You can also make a rinse at home.

How to Flush Your Sinuses

## Nasal and Sinus Rinse Recipe

This saline sinus rinse recipe is from the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (revised for a single use):

### What You Need

- A clean container (e.g., neti pot, sinus rinse squeeze bottle, or bowl)
- A clean spoon for mixing (if using a neti pot or bowl)

[www.moving-chi.com](http://www.moving-chi.com)

[movingchi@moving-chi.com](mailto:movingchi@moving-chi.com)

- A nasal bulb syringe (if using a bowl)
- 3/4 tsp non-iodized salt, such as pickling or canning salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup distilled or previously boiled warm water

#### Instructions

- Place all of the ingredients in your container.
- Mix or shake solution until dissolved.

#### Tips

- Never use tap water, as it can introduce pathogens into your nasal and sinus passages.
- Double-check that you are using non-iodized salt. Iodized salt can irritate the nasal passages.
- If you feel a burning sensation when using the rinse, increase the amount of baking soda.

## Using a Saline Rinse

The two most common ways to perform nasal saline rinses are with a gravity-driven device, such as a neti pot, or with a pressure-driven device, such as a squeeze bottle. A nasal bulb syringe can also be used.<sup>2</sup>

The most convenient way to perform a sinus rinse is in the shower, but it may also be performed over a sink. If you mixed your solution in a bowl, prepare it for use by drawing it up into your nasal bulb syringe.

To complete your rinse:

- The head should be tilted down, with the rinse bottle, bulb syringe, or neti pot spout placed into the upper nostril.
- With your mouth open, the bottle or syringe is squeezed with moderate force (or the neti pot is poured) so that the water can go through one nostril and out the other while you breathe through your mouth.
- You may notice that mucus comes out of the nose as the water runs out. Keep rinsing one side of the nose until the water comes out clear.
- Repeat the same process for the other nostril.

Saline irrigation may need to be performed on a daily (or multiple times per day) basis for people with severe symptoms, or less often, as symptoms improve.

## Side Effects

Do not perform sinus rinses within at least 60 minutes of your bedtime. The saline will drain down the back of the throat and could cause a cough.

While neti pots are typically considered safe, serious illnesses can occur. *Streptococcus pneumoniae* meningitis has been linked to the use of over-the-counter sinus rinses, even when prepared with distilled water.<sup>3</sup>

There were two deaths in the United States related to brain infection with the amoeba *Naegleria fowleri* from people who used tap water in neti pots for nasal irrigation.<sup>4</sup> Cleaning the device properly is also key to preventing contamination.

## Summary

Nasal and sinus rinses may be used to relieve symptoms, like a runny nose or crusty blockage, that are related to allergies or infection. These rinses are generally safe to use as instructed.

Both over-the-counter products and home remedies can be used, provided that you never use tap water. Be sure the water you use is sterile and has either been boiled or packaged as distilled. Different devices also can be used to perform nasal and sinus rinses, including neti pots, bulb syringes, and rinse bottles. You can try different products to see what works best for you.

# The 10 Best Herbs for Allergies

Written by: Daniel Powers, MS

Published on: June 10, 2022

Seasonal allergies are a common occurrence in today's world.

According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation, around 50 million people in the United States suffer from allergies each year, or around 15% of the population.

This article looks at the scientific research behind the best herbs for allergies.



## What Is Allergic Rhinitis?

Allergic rhinitis is a diagnosis where your nose gets irritated by something you're allergic to, such as pollen, which causes sneezing and other symptoms.

Allergic rhinitis is also known as seasonal allergies, pollinosis, and hay fever.

Allergy symptoms typically include sneezing, runny or blocked nose, itchy skin, watering eyes, wheezing, chest tightness, and coughing.

Allergies can be triggered by a variety of airborne allergens, including:

- Pollen
- Animal dander
- Dust mites
- and Mold





## Best Herbs for Allergies:

Herbal remedies can provide an alternative, natural way to treat allergic rhinitis. If used sensibly, these natural remedies can not only reduce allergy symptoms but prevent them altogether.

Our list includes antihistamine herbs, as well as flavonoids and other plant constituents. Below is a roundup of the best herbs for allergies and various respiratory issues.

### 1. Stinging Nettle

Research shows that stinging nettle may have the ability to reduce symptoms caused by seasonal allergies and hay fever. In fact, it's one of the best anti histamine herbs.

In vitro studies show that stinging nettle has the ability to stabilize mast cells. It's thought that this stabilization effect blocks histamine receptors and stops immune cells from releasing inflammatory molecules that trigger allergic reaction symptoms.

A clinical trial with 98 participants showed that stinging nettle was rated as being more effective than placebo in treating allergic rhinitis symptoms.

Another human clinical trial showed that stinging nettle root helped to reduce nasal smear eosinophil count (a key marker used in diagnosing allergic rhinitis). While both the placebo group and the stinging nettle group experienced a decrease in total allergy symptoms, the findings were labeled as inconclusive.

The researchers noted that their research limitations for this study underscore the need for larger, longer-term studies on nettle for the treatment of allergic rhinitis.

It should also be noted that the study utilized an extract made from stinging nettle root.

Typically the leaf is the part utilized for stabilizing the body's immune response.

**Summary:**

*Stinging nettle leaf appears to be a promising natural remedy for seasonal allergies. However, long-term human clinical trials are needed to ensure the efficacy of nettles for allergies.*

### 2. Plant-Based Flavonoids

Citrus flavonoids are a well-known natural remedy for seasonal allergies.

Common citrus flavonoids include:

- Quercetin
- Rutin
- Hesperidin Methyl Chalcone

Research on citrus bioflavonoids, particularly quercetin, has shown them to exert a natural antihistamine effect on the body. Additionally, they can have anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory effects that can decrease the symptoms of seasonal allergies.

Quercetin is a naturally occurring polyphenol flavonoid, found in some quercetin rich herbs, fruits, and vegetables, including onions, capers, apples, berries, tea, tomatoes, and grapes. A recently published research review on quercetin found that it can regulate Th1/Th2 stability, and decrease the antigen-specific IgE antibody released by B cells. This helps to temper the body's immune response to allergens, which reduces allergy symptoms.

Rutin is a flavonol abundantly found in plants, such as passionflower, buckwheat, tea, and apples. From a molecular standpoint, rutin is very similar to quercetin, with the main difference being that rutin contains a sugar molecule. Thus, it works in the body in a similar fashion. Research shows that rutin can help to reduce inflammation in the body.

Hesperidin methyl chalcone is a flavonoid found in citrus fruit that can help to reduce allergy symptoms. Research suggests that it has the ability to reduce the body's inflammatory response.

**Summary:**

*Research suggests that plant flavonoids can help modulate the body's inflammatory response. This can help reduce the severity of allergic symptoms. Human clinical trials are needed to verify these findings.*

### 3. Rosemary

Rosemary is another antihistamine herb that's important for allergic rhinitis. This herb contains a polyphenol known as rosmarinic acid, which has been shown to help with allergies.

A recent research review found that rosmarinic acid can help to reduce inflammation and allergies.

A clinical trial looked at the impact of rosmarinic acid in individuals with allergies. The study participants were given either rosmarinic acid or a placebo. After 21 days, the rosmarinic acid group reported that they experienced fewer allergy symptoms. The researchers noted that this was thought to be due to a reduction in neutrophils and eosinophils.

A lab-based study found that rosmarinic acid helped to inhibit the allergic airway inflammation induced by house dust mites.

**Summary:**

*Both clinical and lab-based research shows that the rosmarinic acid commonly found in rosemary may help to reduce allergy symptoms.*

### 4. N-acetylcysteine

N-acetylcysteine, also known as NAC, is an amino acid that helps to thin mucus and reduce congestion. This makes it one of the best natural remedies for allergies.

Allergies cause your sinuses to work extra hard to produce mucus to push out allergens. The excess mucus production can lead to thick, rubbery mucus that can collect toward the back of your throat and inside your nose.

The ability to secrete and clear excess mucus is a defense mechanism used by the respiratory system to protect itself from pathogens and particles present in inhaled air.

Research shows that NAC works to break up disulfide bonds in mucus proteins, which thins the mucus and helps to facilitate its clearance.



An animal study showed that NAC also has anti-inflammatory effects, which could explain a secondary benefit for individuals with allergic rhinitis.

**Summary:**

*Research indicates that NAC is effective in helping to thin mucus. This benefits individuals with allergies as it can help to remove mucus buildup.*

## 5. Garlic

Garlic is one of the best herbs for seasonal allergies. It plays a key role as an antihistamine herb. An animal study found that aged garlic extract helped to reduce histamine release. The researchers theorized that aged garlic extract can modify the function of mast cells, basophils, and activated T lymphocytes, all of which play a leading role in allergic cascade reactions. A lab study discovered that garlic extract can help to reduce airway inflammation. The researchers noted that garlic helped to reduce allergic airway inflammation levels, which included peribronchial lung eosinophils, IgG1 level in lavage and serum, mucous-producing goblet cells grade, and peribronchial and perivascular inflammation. Another lab-based study found that garlic suppresses the body's allergic response. The mechanism for its anti-allergic action is thought to involve suppressions of Syk, cPLA2, 5-LO, and COX-2.

Consider keeping garlic on hand as an antihistamine herbal remedy.

**Summary:**

*Animal studies, along with lab research, indicate that garlic may help to reduce inflammation in the respiratory tract, which can help to reduce allergy symptoms. Human clinical studies are needed to verify these initial findings.*

## 6. Black Seed

Black seed, also known as black cumin, is a seed that comes from the *Nigella sativa* plant. It's typically made into a black seed oil, which is a dietary supplement that can be consumed similarly to a tincture.

Black seed is known to be a helpful herb for hay fever and hair growth.

A clinical trial recently showed the benefits of black seed for allergic rhinitis. In the study, 68 individuals with allergic rhinitis used black seed oil nasal drops daily for 6 weeks. The study participants were divided into three groups, a moderate allergy group, a mild allergy group, and a severe allergy group.

After 6 weeks, 100% of the patients in the mild group became symptoms free; 68.7% of those in the moderate group became symptoms free and 25% were improved; while in the severe group 58.3% became symptoms free and 25% were improved. The researchers noted that the black seed oil treatment was well tolerated with minimal side effects.

Another human clinical trial involved looking at the impact of black seed oil in 152 individuals with allergic diseases (allergic rhinitis, bronchial asthma, atopic eczema). These individuals were given black seed capsules at a dose of 40-80 mg/kg/day. The patients' IgE and eosinophil levels were measured before and after the trial and, additionally, their subjective feelings were also measured throughout the study. The score of subjective feeling decreased over the course of treatment. The researchers noted positive changes in IgE and eosinophil levels, which helped to reduce allergic symptoms.

**Summary:**

*Clinical research indicates that black seed oil may benefit the respiratory system and may help to reduce hay fever symptoms.*

## 7. Butterbur

Butterbur, known as *Petasites hybridus*, is a plant in the *Asteraceae* family of plants. It's regarded as one of the best herbs for allergies.

A clinical trial compared the effectiveness of butterbur and cetirizine (i.e. Zyrtec®) for allergy treatment. In the study, 131 individuals were given either butterbur (one tablet, four times daily) or cetirizine (one tablet every night) over the course of two weeks. The researchers reported that the effects of butterbur are similar to those of cetirizine in patients with seasonal allergic rhinitis. However, the cetirizine antihistamine group reported increased levels of drowsiness. The study concluded that butterbur should be considered for treating seasonal allergic rhinitis when the sedative effects of antihistamines need to be avoided.

A double-blind, placebo-controlled study looked at the impact of butterbur in individuals with allergic rhinitis. The researchers discovered that butterbur is an effective treatment for intermittent allergic rhinitis symptoms and is well tolerated.

Researchers believe that Petatewalide B, a compound found in butterbur, has anti-allergic activities. Specifically, the compound inhibits the activation of  $\beta$ -hexosaminidase in RBL-2H3 mast cells. Petatewalide B also inhibits nitric oxide synthase, which decreases nitric oxide production in mouse peritoneal macrophages. The compound also decreases the concentration of eosinophils, macrophages, and lymphocytes in mouse bronchoalveolar lavage fluid.

### **Summary:**

*Clinical research indicates that butterbur is an effective natural therapy for reducing allergies. Larger-scale human clinical trials are needed to verify clinical safety.*

## 8. Turmeric

Turmeric, and its active ingredient curcumin, has proven to be one of the best herbs for allergic rhinitis and respiratory health.

A research review found that individuals who took turmeric experienced anti-allergic effects that inhibited the release of histamine from mast cells. Further animal research also demonstrated marked inhibition of the allergic response using turmeric. These findings suggest curcumin may have an antihistamine-like effect.

A clinical trial looked at the impact of turmeric in individuals with a chronic respiratory system inflammatory disease. The study contained a total of 77 patients with mild-to-moderate symptoms.

Each subject received a total of 1,000 mg of curcumin per day, split into two 500mg doses over the course of 1 month. The study's results showed that the curcumin group saw significant improvements in reduced airway obstruction. The researchers noted that this is likely due to turmeric's anti-inflammatory effect, which helped to increase overall lung function.

### **Summary:**

*Research indicates that turmeric may possess anti-inflammatory effects that can help support respiratory health.*

## 9. Ginger

Ginger is an effective anti-inflammatory herb that may help to reduce allergic symptoms.

A human clinical trial showed that ginger reduced total serum IgE after 4 weeks of treatment. This helped to improve allergy symptoms in the study participants.

Another human clinical trial compared the effects of 500mg of ginger extract vs. loratadine (i.e. Claritin®), a popular antihistamine drug. The results showed that both the ginger extract and loratadine groups significantly decreased allergies, although there was no significant difference

between the two groups. The researchers noted that ginger caused fewer side effects, especially drowsiness, fatigue, dizziness, and constipation.

An animal study found that ginger helped to reduce the severity of sneezing and nasal rubbing and suppressed infiltration of mast cells in nasal mucosa and secretion of OVA-specific IgE in serum. Additionally, 6-Gingerol, a phytochemical in ginger was shown to inhibit the expression of not only Th2 cytokines but also Th1 cytokines in OVA-sensitized spleen cells.

**Summary:**

*Research indicates that ginger extract may be able to help to reduce symptoms of allergic rhinitis.*

## 10. Shilajit

[Shilajit](#) is a resinous substance that develops over centuries from the slow decomposition of plants. It is commonly used in Ayurvedic medicine.

Initial research suggests that shilajit may be a powerful natural remedy for hay fever.

Researchers believe that shilajit has anti-allergic properties. It is thought that it has the ability to stabilize mast cells.

Mast cells are cells found in your body that are responsible for allergic reactions. When mast cells come into contact with an allergen (such as pollen), they release histamine, cytokines, and a host of other inflammatory molecules. These molecules kickstart an inflammatory response in the body that cause common allergy symptoms.

When mast cells are stabilized, it prevents your body from starting this inflammatory cascade.

**Summary:**

*Researchers note that shilajit may help with seasonal allergies. Clinical trials are needed to verify this claim.*



## Best Allergy Supplement:

A variety of different herbs have the ability to help with allergies. This begs the question, what is the best herbal supplement for allergies?

We recommend looking at Utzy Naturals' Allurtica formula.

Hiburil is a herbal supplement for allergies that contains organic stinging nettle, flavonoids, and rosemary – our top herbs for allergies in one convenient formula.

Utzy Naturals' products are made in the USA in an NSF®-certified facility. Their products are tested for quality, purity, and potency.

If you are looking for a natural allergy solution, then consider picking up this antihistamine supplement on Utzy's website.

As always, it's important to recognize that often dietary and lifestyle changes are also needed to see positive change. Adding a supplement in isolation isn't a cure-all.

## Typical Treatments For Allergies:

Standard treatment for allergies includes avoiding allergens or taking medicine (typically an antihistamine).

When it comes to avoiding allergens, below are some helpful tips:

- Stay indoors on dry, windy days. The best time to go outside is after a good rain, which helps clear pollen from the air.
- Avoid lawn mowing, weed pulling, and other gardening chores that stir up allergens.
- Remove clothes you've worn outside and shower to rinse pollen from your skin and hair.
- Don't hang laundry outside — pollen can stick to sheets and towels.

As far as standard medical treatment for allergies, the list of standard over-the-counter allergy medicines includes:

- Allegra (fexofenadine)
- Benadryl (diphenhydramine)
- Claritin (loratadine)
- Xyzal (levocetirizine)
- Zyrtec (cetirizine)

Antihistamines work by blocking the effects of a substance called histamine in your body.

Histamine is typically released when your body detects something that it identifies as harmful, such as an allergen like pollen.

Histamine causes blood vessels to expand and the skin to swell, which helps protect the body. However, this leads to a host of symptoms that we associate with allergens (sneezing, itching, etc...)

It should be noted that antihistamines have been tied to a number of side effects, including:

- Hypertension
- Cardiovascular disease
- Urinary retention
- Drowsiness
- Dry mouth and eyes
- Blurred or double vision

Finding a natural antihistamine can help to provide the benefits of antihistamines without the potential side effects.

Herbal Teas for Congestion are also a good way to treat allergy symptoms.

## Conclusion:

In this article, we've provided a list of herbs that help with allergies. The effects of these herbs are well documented and they appear to be a safe alternative for those who suffer from allergies or hay fever.

Whether you are looking for herbs that are antihistamines, or you are looking for antiinflammatory herbs, there are quite a few to choose from.

Both clinical research and traditional usage indicate that these herbal alternatives may be a natural way to reduce allergies.

If you've been looking to add natural remedies into your diet that may help with reducing hay fever symptoms, consider trying these herbs!

As always, make sure to consult your doctor before making any changes to your diet or adding a new supplement.

## May Class Options

Monday Noon Stability Ball class (Studio)(*Zoom and In Person*)(3 Classes)

Monday 6pm Yoga (Studio)(*Zoom and In Person*) (3 Classes)

Tuesday 10am Senior Yoga (Fridley CE)(*In Person ONLY*) This is an ongoing, pay as you go class

Tuesday Noon Yoga (Studio) (*Zoom and In Person*) (4 Classes)

Tuesday 6pm Yoga (Fridley Columbia Heights)(*Zoom and In Person*) (4 Classes)

Wednesday Noon Chi Kung Class (Studio) (*Zoom and In Person*)(5 Classes)

Wednesday 6pm T'ai Chi Ch'uan (Fridley Columbia Heights)(*In Person ONLY*) (5 Classes)

Thursday Noon Yoga (Studio)(*Zoom and In Person*)(4 Classes) **NO CLASS MAY 2nd**

Thursday 6pm Yoga (Spring Lake Park)(*Zoom and In Person*) (5 Classes)

Friday 10:30am Gentle Yoga (St Anthony) (*Zoom and In Person*)(9 Classes)Class runs May 3rd to June 28th

Friday Noon Stability Ball class (Studio)(*Zoom and In Person*)(5 Classes)

Saturday 10am Yoga (Fridley Columbia Heights) (*Zoom and In Person*)(3 Classes) **NO CLASS MAY 25th**