

SEASONAL ALLERGIES

Staying Healthy with Dr. Aieta, N.D.

After the crazy winter we just had, most of us are all welcoming the nice weather of spring. But many allergy sufferers may not be so excited. As the trees and flowers bloom, their pollen becomes a major source of allergies, which can present symptoms like itchy eyes and throat, runny and clogged nose, and, in some cases, an annoying cough due to post-nasal drip.

In simple terms, an allergy is an over-reactive response of the immune system to certain substances that are foreign to our bodies, called allergens. We acquire our allergies throughout our life, and some people are more susceptible than others. One must have at least one contact with a substance to become allergic to it.

Conventional allergy treatment is most commonly directed to block the immune response, or in more severe cases, to suppress the entire immune function with steroids. While this approach can provide symptomatic relief, it does nothing to address the underlying cause of

the problem. Patients often become dependant on their medication, suffer from numerous side effects, and even worsen their overall health by constantly suppressing their immune system.

A holistic approach to allergy relief is based on identifying and eliminating the underlying cause of the disease rather than masking its symptoms.

I've found that most people who suffer from seasonal allergies also have some underlying food allergies. Normally they don't notice many symptoms from the food allergies, but coupled with allergens from the environment, the body becomes overloaded and symptoms occur.

The first obvious step is to change the person's diet and remove the most allergenic foods through an elimination diet. In some cases, I will run specific blood tests for food allergies as well as environmental allergies such as pollen, grass, dust and mold, among others. Many times I'll see dramatic results when patients have food allergies, and I do things to re-

pair the integrity of the intestinal barrier through the use of different herbs and nutrients.

To help strengthen the respiratory barriers in the nose and lungs, I may recommend a variety of different nutrients and herbs. The first supplements I use are Vitamin C and bioflavonoids. Both act to improve the integrity of the respiratory mucous membrane barriers.

Vitamin C has the added benefit of helping the body break down the histamine molecule, which is released by the body in response to allergens. A specific bioflavonoid called Quercetin actually works like a natural antihistamine and anti-inflammatory and is extremely effective. I also recommend an herb called freeze-dried stinging nettles leaf extract, which can lead to significant symptom relief.

When I know exactly what the patient is allergic to, I will often use desensitizing homeopathic drops made from the actual allergen in a diluted form.

So, if you're dreading this spring



due to seasonal allergies, visit a naturopathic physician who can work with you to identify contributing food allergies, correct your digestion and recommend some natural non-toxic treatments for allergy symptom control.

Dr. Frank Aieta is a board-certified and licensed Naturopathic Physician with a private practice in West Hartford, Conn. He specializes in the treatment of disease, using natural therapies such as acupuncture, homeopathy, spinal manipulation, clinical nutrition, and herbal medicine. If there is a specific topic you would like to see addressed in an upcoming column, you can e-mail him at DrAieta@aol.com, or visit www.DrAieta.com for additional information.

NOT TOO BUSY

Women's Fitness with Lisa Thomas

So you think you're too busy to exercise? The truth is we don't need much time to exercise – besides, it is your health we are talking about and that's worth making time for.

Try the following workout that can last from 12 to 30 minutes; depending on how much time you have.

The key to burning calories during short workouts is to crank up the intensity and work harder than usual. This means increasing your perceived exertion to between 5-9, on a scale of 1-10. To burn more calories shoot for 12 minutes of:

- Running – You don't have to sprint, but try to run faster than normal, or alternate between walking and jogging.
- Speed walking – Walk as fast as you can without breaking into a run. It's harder than you think.
- Walking stairs – Run or walk up a flight (or more) and recover by slowly walking back down.

- Hill-walking – Find a medium-sized hill and walk or run up as fast as you can. Recover with a slow walk back down and repeat.

- Any gym machine – Hop on any cardio machine for a 12-minute blast. Try something different: Stairmaster and the rowing machine are two tough ones.

- Jump rope – Get some good tunes to pump you up for this one.

Any one of these exercises for 12 minutes will have you working hard. You can also do one set of each of these for 30 seconds to a minute, and move on to the next. The object is to put together a variety of moves for an intense workout.

The moves below are great ways to get your heart rate up in a short time. Turn this workout into something that fits your fitness level and schedule.

- Jumping jacks – These little buggers are self-explanatory. Oh, and no cheating.
- Jogging in place – Lift your knees

and pump your arms to get your heart rate up.

- Plyometric lunges – Begin in a basic lunge position. In an explosive movement, jump, switch legs in the air and land with bent knees into lunge.

- Ski hops – With feet together, jump from side to side, landing with knees bent.

- Jump rope – You know the drill.
- Skipping – It's much harder than you remember.

- Step jumps – Stand in front of step or platform and jump onto it, landing with both feet (harder) or a staggered landing. Step down and repeat.

- Squat hops – Stand with feet wide. Lower into a squat and hop forward four times, keeping feet wide, legs bent into squat. Walk back and repeat.

- Hill climbers – In a push-up position one leg remains out straight and the other bends at the knee into the chest and quickly alternate the knee



in.

- Squat thrust – Standing up in a wide-leg squat, quickly drop hands down to the ground and shoot legs out behind you, return just a fast into the squat.

Make sure you warm up with some light cardio. And don't forget a quick cool down. Yeah, it's really that easy.

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