



Seasonal Allergies

The Bane of Fresno

Living here in Fresno is an interesting and fulfilling experience (at least in my humble opinion), but living in the “allergy and asthma capital of the world” is not the most conducive to good living.

Many of my patients have asked what exactly “allergies” are and what can be done about them.

“Allergies” are also known technically as seasonal allergic rhinitis (SAR) or perennial allergic rhinitis, depending on how many months of the year that you suffer from allergies. The triggers (or allergens) for your allergies range from molds and pollens to even cockroach poop (a very nasty asthma trigger, by the way).

SAR is actually caused by an *overactive* immune system. The allergens get into your upper respiratory tract, e.g., nasal passages, and there they trigger an allergic reaction. Specifically, they activate a portion of your immune system that uses specific antibodies called IgE. When these types of antibodies bind to either a mast cell or a basophil (each are full of histamines), they cause them to degranulate, releasing the histamines. These histamines bind to many different receptors and give you the vast majority of your symptoms from “allergies,” i.e., congestion, runny nose, and watery/itchy eyes.

So how are they treated? The options include avoidance of the triggers, long-term injections of the allergens, chronic antihistamine use, immune-suppressing catabolic steroid use (inhaled, injected and oral), and the use of supplements to either modulate the immune system or stabilize the mast cells and basophils that are involved with this process.

The injections are normally given in an allergist’s office and only after the allergens that you react to have been identified. The basis of the treatment is to change your body’s response to the allergens from an IgE response to an IgG response. This will avoid the degranulation process. This, however, can *literally take years* to complete and it may never happen, despite the years of injections and the thousands of dollars spent on the procedure. You can see that I am not for it.

Chronic antihistamines include the sedating type: **Benadryl**[®] (diphenhydramine hydrochloride) and **Chlor-Trimeton**[®]. Non-sedating antihistamines include: **Claritin**[®], **Clarinet**[®], **Zyrtec**[®] and **Allegra**[®]. These are sometimes combined with a decongestant, pseudoephedrine (**Sudafed**[®]), to help dry out the

nasal passages. The antihistamines literally block the histamines from reaching cell receptors in your body and activating that portion of your immune system.

Catabolic steroids suppress the immune system so that it is not as reactive to the allergens. Oral steroids, e.g., prednisone or dexamethasone, are used only in *extreme* cases because of the side-effects of long-term use. A one-time injection of steroids is used sometimes as an “allergy shot” and will help to suppress the immune system temporarily while awaiting the oral medications to take effect. Inhaled nasal steroids, e.g., **Rhinocort Aqua**[®], **Nasacort AQ**[®] and **Flonase**[®], have the same effects as the oral/injected steroids except they are limited as to where they work. These are sprayed up into the nasal cavity and, in regular doses, only work where they are sprayed. Absorption into the body is minimal at regular doses and thus they are very safe to use.

The final option for treatment of allergies is a nutritional protocol with Advanced Medical Therapeutics[™] known as **CNCR Protocol II**[™]. It is a collection of 10 different mushrooms that will help support your immune system and keeps it in check. We have had great success here in this practice using mushrooms for this specific purpose. Rather than an immune booster like *Echinacea*, it modulates your immune system. So if your immune system needed boosting, it would help that. If your immune system needed to be calmed down (as in this case), the mushrooms would adjust your immune system in that fashion, keeping it in check to prevent the overactive response.

One very impressive response we have seen using mushrooms is with *chronic hives*. We have them take 4 capsules of mushrooms twice a day for one month and then reduce the dose slowly until they begin having attacks again then bring the dose back up to the next higher dose that was efficacious. We literally have had a **100% response** to date and the people who suffered with it are *no longer on any other medications*.

CNCR Protocol II[™] may be a useful dietary supplement for those who wish to enhance their immune system function. To read more about this wonderful protocol and the references that demonstrate mushrooms’ effectiveness on the immune system and its components, please read the article on the Immune System.

Something also to keep in mind is that **Claritin**[®] is now over-the-counter and is quite expensive at al-

most \$1/pill. Many insurances now require that you fail a trial of Claritin before they authorize the remaining prescription antihistamines. In addition, the remaining non-sedating anti-histamines will be over-the-counter within the next few years. Keep this in

mind when comparing the costs of antihistamines with the natural compounds. Also remember that these natural compounds do more for you than just keep your nose from running and your eyes from watering.