



hanover healthfoods

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Hayfever Helpers



The table on Page 2 shows the peak periods for different pollens types.

Avoiding allergens altogether would be the best way to reduce symptoms. Obviously this is not always possible but help is at hand to reduce histamine production.

Quercetin – this antioxidant is found naturally in apples, onions and the brassica type vegetables along with nettle tea. Being a potent antioxidant, quercetin also possesses anti-inflammatory and anti-histamine qualities. Take 400mg up to 3 times per day to help reduce puffy eyes and nasal irritation.

Vitamin C – this antioxidant is mostly known for its effects in reducing the symptoms of a cold but this vitamin also is a natural anti-histamine in its own right. Incidentally it also appears to be most beneficial for the respiratory tract and can protect the lungs. Try 3 grams a day to see results.

Pycnogenol – this comes from French maritime pine bark trees and is a rich source of plant flavonoids (OPCs). It has been shown to be useful for hayfever by inhibition of the release of histamine from mast cells. General hayfever medications tend to work by stopping histamine attaching itself to cells. Pycnogenol is more efficient by stopping the release of histamine before it has a chance to attach itself to the cells in the body and produce an allergic reaction.

Honey – for some people a locally sourced unpasteurised and unfiltered honey does the trick. This works by slowly exposing themselves to small amounts of pollen present in the honey
(continued overleaf)

The weather is starting to ease which hopefully means spring is on the way and as delighted as we all are to have the lighter evenings, not all of us can leap into the countryside without consequences – dreaded hayfever.

Hayfever is the term given to seasonal allergic rhinitis brought on by pollens from trees, grasses and weeds. Although pollens are the main cause, pollutants from cigarette smoke, pesticides and other chemicals can act as a trigger, sensitising the membranes in our nose and throat so that when we do breathe in pollens, the body perceives this as foreign and potentially harmful and inflammatory/allergic symptoms ensue. When we are exposed to an allergen, the body releases histamine from mast cells to fight off the allergen - this is called the allergic response, leading to symptoms such as sneezing and a runny nose, post-nasal drip, and/or fatigue. The pollen season normally lasts from March to August but can start as early as January and last till as late as November. As much as 95% of people who display symptoms are allergic to grass pollens and the bad news is that Edinburgh and the central belt on average has a higher pollen count during the summer months when compared to the rest of Scotland.

DEFINING: Cinnamon

Cinnamon has been used as a medicine and a food for many hundreds of years. The sticks, or quills, are actually the rolled and dried bark of the Cinnamon tree. Like Turmeric, research on it's health benefits increases by the month which makes it an interesting remedy to catch up on.



Cinnamon has got many uses. It can be a vital part of a regime to keep Candida at bay. It calms the digestive tract and is generally anti-spasmodic. At the moment most of the research and interest is in it's effects of blood sugar and glucose tolerance. A recent placebo-controlled study showed a 8% fall in blood sugar and blood pressure with taking 2g of Cinnamon for 12 weeks. No fall was found in the placebo group.

The 'Cinnamon tree' itself comes from a big family with one hundred members. There are two main species though that you will be buying. The Cinnamon which grows in Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) and India is known as Cinnamon zeylanicum, sometimes also 'True Cinnamon' or *C. verum*.

Cinnamon which is grown in South East Asia and is the main form in food supplements (and also the form on which virtually all medical research has been conducted) is called Cinnamon aromaticum, alternatively *C. cassia*, or just Cassia.

The reason for bringing this up is that over the past few months we have had a number of queries (fuelled by the internet...) as to which form of Cinnamon is the best. The

prevailing opinion from the net is 'Ceylon Cinnamon good, Cassia bad.' This seems to be based on concerns that *C. cassia* contains high levels of a natural substance called Coumarin. All Cinnamons contain Coumarin which has a blood-thinning effect but Cassia has slightly higher levels. Coumarins have been linked (at high levels) to liver and kidney problems, as well as cancer.

Sebastian Pole, Medical Herbalist and founder of Pukka Herbs is at pains to point out that all of the studies done showing the side-effects of Coumarins were actually done on rodents which use a different pathway in the liver to it break down. Humans use a much more efficient pathway. Research shows that humans can safely tolerate up to 500mg of Coumarins daily which would equate to 42 cups of Pukka's Three Cinnamon tea, for example.

In Hanover Healthfoods we offer 'true' Cinnamon in ground, quills and capsules. We also have the Cassia form in capsules and in combination in other products.

and desensitising themselves. One of the more tastier ways to stop the sneezes!

Luffa – this herbal remedy is useful for hayfever and general allergies also. It works best when taken 1-2 weeks before the onset of the allergy season and can be used longer term for non-seasonal allergies. This remedy is great for alleviating nasal discharge and a blocked nose.

Many of those with hayfever also suffer from sensitivities to foods, most commonly wheat and dairy. Avoiding dairy products is a good idea when suffering hayfever symptoms as they tend to be mucous forming and can exacerbate the problem. Avoiding foods that you are sensitive to, such as wheat and gluten, are also a good idea. Try to reduce inflammation causing foods such as meat, refined foods, sugar and caffeine and avoid alcohol – this contains small amounts of histamine.

Paul, 6 Years at Hanover Healthfoods

