

# Drug-Free Ways to Beat Allergies

Each year, more than 50 million Americans suffer from allergies, making them the sixth-leading cause of chronic illness in the United States, with an annual cost in excess of \$18 billion. And for many people, allergies seem to worsen with age.

You can try using antihistamines when allergies strike and a nasal steroid prior to the onset of your seasonal woes, says Dr. Andy Nish, an allergy specialist from Georgia, but experts say that natural remedies may be just as effective without the potential side effects of decongestant medications.

“When a person with an allergy encounters the offending substance, the immune system interprets it as the enemy,” Ellen

Kamhi, Ph.D., aka “The Natural Nurse” tells *Health Radar*. “To help ward off the intruder, the human body activates antibodies and releases a substance called histamine.

“Allergy medications are called antihistamines because they attempt to turn off this natural, overzealous reaction. The result is that other body tissues get into the battle and impose a number of unpleasant side effects for the allergy sufferer. These can include annoying reactions such as rashes and scratchy throat. But they can also become frightening, such as a closed throat and difficulty breathing.”

Here are some natural ways to tame allergies:

- **Try milk thistle.** This herbal remedy acts as a protector and

regenerator of the liver and helps repair tissue damaged by allergens while dealing with the accompanying symptoms.

- **Enjoy echinacea and goldenseal.** These two herbs work together to combat the discomfort of allergies and reduce excess mucous in the nasal and respiratory tracts, says Kamhi, author of “The Natural Medicine Chest.”

- **Drink green tea.** Widely recognized as a super food for many conditions, green tea is also beneficial for allergies. The reason: It contains a potent antioxidant called epigallocatechin (EGCG) that inhibits allergies at a cellular level by reducing inflammation.

Nish suggests that you can also reduce allergens by keeping windows in your home and car closed during the pollen season. □

## 5 Supplements that Conquer Stress

Stress is linked to the six leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide, according to the American Psychological Association. But Dr. Chris D’Adamo, an epidemiologist at the University of Maryland, tells *Health Radar* that “many prescription drugs for anxiety and stress like benzodiazepines may be problematic in the long run.”

Here are some supplements that can help ease the body’s stress response without drugs:

**1. B-complex vitamins.**

Supplements that

contain B vitamins help support production of neurotransmitters and hormones that facilitate nervous system function.

**2. Rhodiola rosea.** D’Adamo says that this herb is his first choice for increasing resistance to stress. According to the American Botanical Council, it helps prevent stress and fatigue, and acts as an antioxidant to enhance the immune system.

**3. Ashwagandha.** The benefits of this plant are wide-ranging, but it’s a real superstar when it comes to lowering stress

levels. One 2017 study showed a 44 percent reduction in stress levels after taking ashwagandha, compared to just a 5.5 percent decrease in a placebo group.

**4. Valerian.** Though native to Europe and Asia, valerian is now grown in North America as well. It’s used to treat sleep disorders, but is also effective for treating anxiety and psychological stress.

**5. Essential oils.** Lavender and citrus oils are great for relieving stress and anxiety, as well as for dealing with sleepless nights. □