

From the Desk of Dr. Stephen Green: Holistic Practitioner and Nutritionist
For more information call (845) 294-9990

EASY ALLERGY REMEDY: SALINE

Spring and summer bring with them flowers, pollen and allergies. While there are a plethora of over-the-counter and prescription medications for symptomatic relief of allergic symptoms, sometimes the simplest solutions are the most effective. They are certainly the cheapest!

Saline nasal sprays, mists and washes are a safe, simple combination of salt and water that can be extremely helpful in relieving nasal stuffiness, congestion and dryness. Normal (isotonic) saline has the same concentration of salt as is normally found in the body and is therefore very gentle. There are several commercial preparations of saline, such as Ocean (made by Fleming), Little Noses (by Vetco and Simply Saline (by Blairex). These solutions often contain preservatives which can be irritating, so making your own saline at home may be both medically and economically preferable.

The recipe is simple: mix ½ teaspoon uniodized salt (the iodine can be irritating) with 8 ounces (one cup) of water that has been boiled and is still warm. You may add one small pinch of baking soda to decrease stinging. Allow the mixture to cool to body temperature before using. You can use an ear bulb syringe to squirt the saline up your nostrils. Sometimes commercial saline spray bottles are easy to refill.

There is no limit to how often you can use normal saline to irrigate your nose. A minimum of four times per day until symptoms resolve is generally recommended. Saline can be used for more than just allergy sufferers; it can relieve nasal congestion caused by the common cold and can be helpful for babies, whose small noses become congested easily. With the lid on tightly, store commercial saline at room temperature. Keep homemade saline in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours and then throw it out and make a new batch if needed. Wipe the tip of the applicator with a clean, damp tissue and replace the cap right after use. Do not share your saline with others.

High pollen counts can also cause itchy, watery eyes. While there are expensive allergy eye drops you can buy, you may want to try this simple home remedy. Fill your bathroom sink with cool or tepid water. Add a tablespoon of uniodized salt. Holding your breath, submerge your face. Open your eyes under water and blink a few times. That's it! Rinsing your eyes is refreshing and rinses away pollen. However, an eye cup with saline will also help prevent and relieve itchy eyes and doesn't require you to get your head into a sink. Besides, an eyecup is portable. It is an easy, but surprisingly effective therapy.

For further information on allergies, holistic healing, nutrition and chiropractic, contact
Dr. Stephen Green at 845-294-9990