



Spring is here! It is time to put away the heavy coats and break out the sunglasses. But the weather conditions that lead to "spring fever" also give rise to another affliction that affects many of us—hay fever. Hay fever can make those who are sensitive to pollen miserable, interfering with work and play. Fortunately, modern medicine has developed drugs which give temporary relief from hay fever's common symptoms. As users of antihistamines and decongestants know, however, there are side effects to these over-the-counter drugs. The side effect most often experienced is drowsiness.

A Gallup survey of allergy sufferers was conducted several years ago. This survey found that the package warnings against driving or operating heavy machinery while taking the medicine are largely ignored. If you think about it, this shouldn't be surprising—since people take the medication so that they *can* continue with their normal activities, and they attempt to do so.

We hope that people will be aware of the drowsiness problem and watch out for it while working or driving. However, a recent Cal-OSHA Reporter article indicates this is not the case. A University Medical Center research team conducted an allergy workshop and concluded that most workers who are trying to control their allergies with over-the-counter drugs are not aware that they are sedated. In addition to feeling drowsy, other side effects of being sedated are reduced coordination, slowed reaction time and impaired judgment. These may be even less recognizable than drowsiness, but any of this can happen when a person is not fully alert. The use of allergy medication can also effect one's ability to focus on the work to be done by causing dizziness, nervousness, nausea or headaches.

Working in a hazardous industry is dangerous enough in itself. You must be alert at all times and able to react to production issues, recognize safety hazards, and be an asset to the crew. So what can be done to reduce the discomfort of hay fever season, yet keep you effective at work? The following tips may be helpful:

- Consider taking the medication for only significant allergy attacks—particularly if your job involves operating machinery or power tools.
- If you need the medicine, take the smallest dose possible that will still provide a level of relief that you need.
- Before taking the medication, read not only the warnings on the outer package, but also the product insert. This small piece of paper, with equally small print, usually has much more detailed information about the product and possible side effects.
- Follow the recommended dosage. More is not necessarily better. Taking "extra doses" may only provide more side effects—and not more relief.

NATURAL REMEDIES FOR ALLERGY RELIEF

APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

Reduces mucous production and cleanse the lymphatic system makes it useful for allergies. It is also said to help digestion, weight loss. Mix 1 tsp with a glass of water

NETI POT & SALINE RINSE

Either use a pre-made saline rinse or make your own by dissolving 1 teaspoon of Himalayan or sea salt in a quart of boiled distilled water. Cool completely and put in the Neti Pot. Pour through one nostril and let it drain out the other.

QUERCETIN

a natural bioflavonoid that is said to help stabilize mast cells to keep them from releasing histamine. Though Quercetin is naturally found in foods like citrus and broccoli, it is very difficult to get the amount needed to relieve allergies from food alone. A supplemental dose can be helpful for preventing allergies or helping acute symptoms.

LOCAL HONEY

Consume a teaspoon or more of raw, unprocessed local honey from as close to where you actually live as possible. Do this one or more time a day to help relieve symptoms. It is often suggested to start this a month or so before allergy season.

