

Hay Fever

by B.Kay Sugg

It's Nothing to Sneeze At!

More than 24 million Americans, and up to 20% of Canadians suffer from pollen-induced respiratory allergies, or “hay fever” (allergic rhinitis). In addition to the affected people feeling miserable, there is an impact to business—an annual cost of about 18 billion dollars in health care expense and lost productivity. Pollen from trees, weeds, and grasses are the main triggers of seasonal allergies at this time of year. While you cannot totally avoid pollen, the steps below can lessen the effect of this natural allergen on your body:



10 Tips to Relieve Seasonal Allergies

EXERCISE AND POLLEN

Avoid exercising outdoors on warm, dry, windy days which bring the highest pollen levels. When you do take part in outdoor activities, wear a pollen-filtering mask if possible. These masks should be breathable, washable, and should filter particles as small as 1.7µm (microns).

WINDOWS CLOSED

Enjoy the sunshine, but keep your windows and doors closed. Because pollen particles are so small, remember that screened porches and windows will not prevent you from being exposed to pollen.

STAYING OUTSIDE

By keeping track of the pollen count for your area, you can limit your time outdoors when the count is high. Your local news station will usually cover the pollen levels in your area, and there are a number of apps you can find which will give you this information as well (My Pollen Forecast, Poncho: Wake Up Weather, WeatherBug, etc.)

NASAL RINSE

Use a nasal rinse to clean mucus from your nose and whisk away bacteria. You can purchase rinse kits, nasal bulbs, or neti pots at most pharmacies. You can make your own rinse with 3 teaspoons of iodide-free salt and 1 teaspoon of baking soda. Mix one teaspoon of the mixture with 8 ounces of distilled water, lean over the sink and gently flush one nostril at a time.

AIR PURIFIER

You can improve the air quality in your home by using an air purifier and by following the maintenance schedule for changing the filter on your air conditioner. Also vacuum your floors regularly.



STAYING HYDRATED

Stay hydrated and eat fresh fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin C and antioxidants to reduce inflammation. Water, sugar-free juices, and nonalcoholic beverages can thin the mucus in your nasal passages and help you find relief. Warm teas, soups, and broth soothe your throat while also providing beneficial steam.

SHOWER AND LAUNDRY

Pollen blows through the air and lands on your clothing and hair. If outside for very long, change your clothes and shoes when entering your home. Showering will wash away allergy triggers that may be clinging to your hair and skin.

WASH YOUR PETS

When pets are outside, they also pick up pollen and other allergens in their fur and can deposit it on furniture and bedding once they go inside. Be sure to bathe pets frequently during months (March and April) when pollen is highest.

ALLERGY SHOTS

Getting an allergy test can help you learn which plants trigger your allergies. Allergy medications can minimize your symptoms. If you are highly sensitive to pollen, allergy shots (allergen immunotherapy) can also be an option. By regular injections containing tiny amounts of the triggering substance, your immune system reaction that causes symptoms will be reduced over time.

Sources: mayoclinic.org, webmd.com, asthma.ca, cdc.gov

Going Green this Spring

Easy Avocado FETA DIP

Nothing says "spring" like the cool, creamy fabulousness of avocado. Not only is it delicious and healthy, but it's vibrant green brings color to your plate and table! This month we're featuring a quick, easy dip that you'll enjoy all season long. The author of the recipe has a blog, [ErinLivesWhole.com](https://www.erinliveswhole.com), with other terrific options to try! Check out the blog for recipes free of common allergens and that feature simple ingredients, are quick to make, and balanced ("a little healthy, a little indulgent"). She also has some great products available—from her ebook to printable grocery lists.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ripe avocados
- 1/2 cup feta
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/3 cup white onion
- 1/4 cup packed cilantro
- juice of one lime
- salt + pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp favorite hot sauce

INSTRUCTIONS

- To begin, blend the avocados, feta, garlic, onion, cilantro, and lime juice in your food processor. Stop as necessary to scrape down the sides.
- Blend until smooth, and then add the salt, pepper, and hot sauce to taste.
- Transfer to a serving dish and top with more hot sauce, feta, and cilantro. Serve it with crackers, freshly chopped raw veggies, pretzels or use as a spread on toast.
- Keep leftover avocado feta dip refrigerated in an airtight container. Before storing, you can optionally drizzle a little bit of extra lime juice on top to help prevent browning.

Source: Erin Lives Whole (<https://www.erinliveswhole.com>)

