

Get hay fever before it gets you

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Hay fever is an allergic reaction which is most commonly triggered by grass or tree pollen. When the allergen is inhaled, the immune system produces the antibody IgE which binds to white blood cells called mast cells and basophils. These cells release histamine resulting in the physical symptoms of the reaction.

These include runny nose, sneezing, itchy watery eyes, fatigue, coughing and sinus congestion.

From a nutritional perspective, intervention includes managing symptoms, but also addressing the root cause of the reaction – a sensitised and imbalanced immune system.

Follow these tips to help strengthen your immune system and reduce your hay fever symptoms:

Increase your intake of green tea and apples. They contain plant sterols, which are known to regulate the immune system and stabilise mast cells.

Eat 2-4 portions of omega-3 rich fish weekly. A diet rich in omega 3 will be less prone to inflammation. Wild caught salmon, mackerel, sardines and herring are good sources. Almonds, flax and chia seeds are also good sources, but you will need to eat them in larger amounts.

Enhance your vitamin D levels. Vitamin D helps to keep the immune system balanced and also has anti-inflammatory properties. If you aren't exposed to sun, you might want to consider a good supplement.

Support your gut. As most of your immune system is located in the gut, make sure yours is in balance by taking a good probiotic.

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