

## *Was your summer blighted by hay fever? Homeopathic treatment during the winter months may be the answer!*

As we batten down the hatches and get out the winter woolies think back to the summer months. Sadly for an increasing number of people the enjoyment of the warmer weather was blighted by the misery of hay fever. Hay fever, or allergic rhinitis, is the most common allergy in the UK, with one in five people suffering symptoms at some point in their lives. The hay fever season can vary for individuals; depending on which substance they are allergic to. Tree pollens, such as birch, arrive first in the spring, followed by grass pollens in the summer and ending with fungal spores in the autumn. However, increased traffic congestion is adding to the problem, with 'urban hay fever' now affecting up to 60% of city residents.


Hay fever is an allergy caused by a weakened immune system. The most common symptoms include itchy, watery eyes, sneezing, coughing, itchy throat & palate, sore throat, respiratory wheezing, runny or stuffed up nose. Symptoms can be uncomfortable, annoying and stressful, severely effecting quality of life. As the highest pollen levels tend to coincide with end of term exams the effects on students are particularly detrimental, with 40% of sufferers likely to drop a grade in exams. This figure rises to 70% for students using sedating anti-histamines.

Conventional treatments include anti-histamines and topical steroids, both of which work by suppressing the body's immune response to allergens. They generally need to be taken on a daily basis and can cause a number of side effects, such as drowsiness.

Homeopathy is a safe, natural, holistic alternative, which can help hay fever sufferers in two ways. Firstly, carefully selected homeopathic remedies offer symptomatic relief, free of unwanted side effects. Secondly, individual constitutional treatment with a professional homeopath will work to strengthen the immune system to prevent the problem returning in the future, although it may take a number of seasons to fully eradicate.

Since a susceptibility to hay fever suggests a deeper underlying cause you may wish to consider individual constitutional treatment. December and January are the ideal months in which to begin constitutional treatment, allowing plenty of time for the immune system to be strengthened before the bombardment from the spring and summer pollens.

If you would like to find out more about how homeopathy may help, or to book a consultation please contact the Body Works clinic. Resident homeopath Josephine Firth is fully qualified and insured, and is a registered member of the Society of Homeopaths.

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