



Hello Spring! Hello Allergies!

By Dr. Michelle Torrance, ND, LAc

I love spring, as does every other person here in the Pacific Northwest. This is the season that our natural beauty truly starts to emerge. And the pollen. And the mold spores that get reactivated on the warmer days. And with the sun shining a little more, let's get all that dust stirred up because it is time for some spring cleaning!

Gesundheit! Need a tissue?

We are in the middle of March, and if you suffer from allergies NOW is the time to get ahead of the game. Not next week, today!

In order to combat allergies, we need to adjust the response that your immune system makes to the environment around it. When it comes to allergies, your immune system is simply confused. It thinks it needs to make a big reaction for a very small insult – and one that isn't particularly dangerous (but don't tell your immune system, it might get offended).

How do we do this?

1. We lower our total load of environmental insults. If there is less to react to, there will be less reaction. Here are some examples of things you can do:
 - a. Get a HEPA filter for your bedroom
 - b. Wash your hair before bed (think of your hair like a huge net, catching all kinds of dust and pollen and then you sleep on it)
 - c. Put on a fresh pillowcase each night
 - d. Avoid your food sensitivities!!
 - e. Use effective supplements
2. Supplements are helpful when it comes to allergies. Supplements can be used to "toughen up" the immune system, or to make it less reactive. I have four on my shelf that I find indispensable around the office this time of year.
 - a. Quercenase by Thorne – this is a great product for anyone with seasonal allergies. With bromelain, it helps the body clean up the debris left by an overactive immune system, and with the quercetin, it keeps the mast cells from "popping" so easily and releasing all that histamine! Histamine is the culprit for our runny noses, watery eyes and sneezing! This is why over the counter allergy medicines are called anti-histamines. They work to neutralize histamine. The approach of a product like Quercenase is to have less histamine released in the first place.

- b. T. Asthmatica by Thorne – another great product with a simple ingredient list. If you're the person with asthma that gets worse by the pollen in the air, or the scent of fresh cut grass, or when you go for a walk or run outdoors, then this supplement is for you. I have seen fantastic results with this formula, and it is absolutely a favorite of mine.
- c. Jade Windscreen – a traditional Chinese formula that I've had patients say "It works better than Claritin!" Think of this formula like the name implies – a screen that shields you from the bad aspects of our environmental air, but that allows the good energy to flow through.

Those are just three products that we carry on the shelves here, but there are many, many more ways to treat allergies – including diet, home hygiene and supporting your general health. If you've got a drippy nose – or know that you will soon – please come in and talk to us! Let's make a plan together to have a congestion-free spring!