

Alliance

Handshake

April 2015

Each spring, summer, and fall the trees, weeds, and grasses release tiny, hard-to-see pollen grains into the air. This can cause a type of allergy called hay fever. Like me, you may be noticing that your eyes are red and watery, your nose, throat and eyes itch, and you are sneezing and congested. You may be experiencing hay fever or even another type of allergy. All types of allergies are very common. Because hay fever can make you miserable and affect your performance at work or school and interfere with leisure activities, we want to dedicate this issue of *Alliance Handshake* to this important topic. You do not have to put up with annoying symptoms. Learning how to avoid triggers and finding the right treatment can make a big difference in how you feel.

-William Van Ry, Owner & CEO

WHAT IS HAY FEVER?

Hay fever, also called allergic rhinitis, causes cold-like signs and symptoms, such as a runny nose, itchy eyes, congestion, sneezing and sinus pressure. But unlike a cold, hay fever isn't caused by a virus. Hay

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It is very important to exercise the mind as well as the body. With each edition of our newsletter, we will include a memory word game for you to complete.

Word Game

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Last issues word: **HOVERING**

heir	oven	rove	hove
hero	over	roving	rein
heroin	ovine	ignore	govern
heron	vein	iron	grin
hinge	vigor	neigh	ogive
hire	vine	nigh	river
hive	vireo	give	groin
hoeing	given	ogre	gore
hoer	ergo	giver	riven
hone	region	gone	grove
horn	reign		

The average is 30 words. Did you meet or beat this standard?

Can you find 40 words within this issue's word **CALORIE**?

fever is caused by your immune system reacting to something either outdoors or indoors – pollen, dust, pet dander – that causes allergies. These are called allergens. Normally, your immune system is your body’s defense system and fights germs or a virus. In hay fever however, your immune system mistakenly thinks a harmless airborne allergen is something harmful and starts to produce antibodies to this allergen. These antibodies tell the immune system to release chemicals such as histamine, into your bloodstream. These chemicals are what cause an allergic reaction that leads to the irritating signs and symptoms of hay fever.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF HAY FEVER

Signs and symptoms of hay fever usually start immediately after you come in contact with a specific allergy-causing substance and can include:

- Runny nose and nasal congestion
- Watery or itchy eyes
- Sneezing or cough
- Itchy nose, roof of the mouth or throat
- Sinus pressure and facial pain
- Swollen, blue-colored skin under the eyes (allergic shiners)
- Decreased sense of smell or taste

Allergies can range from minor to severe and even life threatening.

WHEN CAN I GET HAY FEVER?

Your hay fever symptoms may start or worsen at a particular time of year.

Symptoms can be caused by tree pollen or grasses or weeds which all bloom at different times of year. If you are sensitive to things found indoors such as dust, mold, pet dander, or cockroaches, you may have year round symptoms. Many people have allergy symptoms all year long, but their symptoms get worse during certain times of year.

Although hay fever can begin at any age, you are most likely to develop it during childhood or early adulthood. It is common for hay fever reactions to change over the years. For most people, symptoms tend to diminish slowly as they get older.

TREATMENT

The best hay fever treatment is to avoid the substance that is causing your reaction. This is not always possible and you may need additional treatment. If your hay fever is not too severe, over-the-counter medications may be enough to ease your symptoms. For more bothersome symptoms you need to see your doctor

For a prescription or further testing.

Common over-the-counter medications include antihistamines and decongestants. Antihistamine preparations are usually in pill form but are also available as nose spray and eye drops. Antihistamines can help with itching, sneezing, and runny nose but have less effect on congestion. Use with caution as drowsiness may occur with the use of antihistamines.

Decongestant medications are available in over-the-counter and prescription liquids, tablets, and nose sprays. Side effects to decongestants may include headache, insomnia, increased blood pressure, and irritability. These medications should NOT be used for more than 2-3 days at a time because they can actually make symptoms worse. Do not take decongestants if you have high blood pressure.

Lubricating eye drops or a cool eye compress may help to relieve eye irritation. Rinsing your nasal passages with distilled, sterile saline is a quick, inexpensive and very effective way to relieve nasal congestion. Look for a sterile preparation and squeeze bottle designed for nose rinsing at your pharmacy. Use only sterile saline irrigation solution.

See your doctor if symptoms persist or worsen.

LIFESTYLE & HOME REMEDIES

It is impossible to totally avoid allergens but you can reduce your symptoms by taking some steps to limit your exposure to them. It helps to know exactly what you are allergic to so that you can avoid your specific triggers.

If you are allergic to pollen or mold:

- Close doors and windows during pollen season
- Don't hang laundry outside
- Use air conditioning in your home and your car
- Use an allergy filter in your furnace
- Avoid outdoor activity in the early morning when pollen count is highest
- Stay indoors on dry, windy days
- Use a dehumidifier
- Avoid mowing the lawn or raking leaves
- Wear a dust mask when outdoors.

If you are allergic to dust mites:

- Use allergy-proof covers on mattresses, box springs, and pillows
- Use a dehumidifier or air conditioner to reduce indoor humidity
- Consider removing carpets, especially where you sleep.

If you are allergic to pet dander:

- Keep pets out of the bedroom; put them outdoors when possible

- Bathe your pet weekly if possible or use wipes designed to reduce danger.

Cockroaches are a common cause of allergy. To avoid this allergy:

- Block cracks and crevices where roaches can enter your home
- Fix leaky faucets and pipes
- Wash dishes and empty garbage daily
- Sweep food crumbs from counters, floors, and around pet eating areas
- Professional extermination

IS IT HAY FEVER OR A COLD?

Signs and symptoms of the two can be different. Here is how you can tell which is causing symptoms.

	Hay Fever	Colds
Signs & Symptoms	Runny nose with thin, watery discharge. No fever	Runny nose with watery or thick yellow discharge. Body aches. Low grade fever.
Onset: When did it start?	Immediately after exposure to allergens	1-3 days after exposure to a cold virus
Duration: How long did it last?	As long as you are exposed to the allergen.	3-7 days

