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Environment Allergy Management And Food Autoimmune

Spring allergies are brought on by pollen directly contacting our mucus membranes, such as in the eyes, by inhalation into the sinuses and respiratory tract, and by swallowing pollen into digestive system. For sensitized individuals, pollen sets off an immune reaction that releases histamine from specialized white blood cells called mast cells. Excessive histamines causes inflamed tissue swelling and over production of mucus which brings on a plethora of the familiar irritating allergy symptoms.

There are many over the counter allergy medications. Antihistamines such as Allegra, Benadryl, Claritin and Zyrtec can help but may cause sedation and other side effects. I don't recommend Sudafed type decongestants because they can raise heart rate and blood pressure, cause anxiousness, and overly dry out mucus membranes which can lead to sinus infections.

Two natural antihistamines that I find especially affective for allergy management are plant derived Quercetin and freeze dried Nettles. Our pharmacy carries Vital Nutrients Quercetin 250 mg caps and Eclectic's freeze dried nettles 300 mg caps. Other brands can be found if most health food stores.

Quercetin is a bioflavonoid found in apples, onion skin, types of palm and surprisingly, golden rod. It "calms down" mast cells, which reduces histamine levels. It is not sedating or stimulating to the nervous system and best taken early in the allergy season until symptoms resolve. It's safe for children and adults, though I don't recommend it to women trying to conceive or who are pregnant. A typical dose is 500 mg to 1000 mg in one to three doses daily.

Freeze dried Nettles (don't pick them yourself because they cause a heck of a localized sting) contain many nutritive minerals and decrease allergy symptoms to numerous allergens, including to cats. I recommend 300 mg twice daily in capsules. Nettles is a natural diuretic, so be sure to stay hydrated, which is also important when dealing with allergies.

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I also recommend Anti-Allergy Hygiene practices. Pollen is sticky. It collects on our cars, furniture, clothes, and especially on hair, ours and our pets. Wear a baseball cap, (a Red Sox cap works really well), especially on warm windy days. Shower or at least wash your face before going to bed and change your pillow case often.

Pets are great pollen collectors. Wipe them down with a fresh slightly damp rag when they come indoors. If you sleep in your pet's bed (let's face it, if you sleep with your pets, it is their bed), and cover the bed in a fresh sheet every night. This makes for a lot of laundry, but it really cuts down on accumulating pollen. Lastly, allergy season is not the time to be snuggling your pet close to your face...good luck with that.