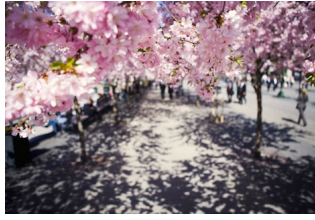


Natural Remedies For Spring Eye Allergies

Written by Kirstina Bolton



Yes, it's that time of the year again, when eye allergies get the best of us. Luckily, thanks to Rochelle Myers, OD of Southwestern Eye Center, we know exactly what causes these allergies and, more importantly, how to combat them.



What causes eye allergies in the first place?

"The conjunctiva is a clear covering that protects the white surface of the eye as well as the inside of the eyelids," Myers says. "When the eyes are open, the conjunctiva is exposed to all the allergens in the air (dust, pollens, molds, etc.). These substances cause mast cells to release histamine and other allergy mediators so the eyes begin to itch, burn and water. Inflammation then causes the eyes to become red and irritated."

What proper precautions would people take as we head into spring?

"Protect your eyes," Myers says. "You should wear your glasses or sunglasses anytime you are outside because it acts as a barrier keeping the allergens from reaching the conjunctiva." It is also important to not rub your eyes. "This mechanical action stimulates the allergic response," Myers says. "And be sure to wash your hands often; this will keep the allergens from being transferred to the eyes."

What are the best and most popular natural remedies for eye allergies?

Some of the more common natural remedies are:

- Cold compresses (either cold, damp wash towels or cold spoons)
- 2-3 drops of rose water in the eyes (can be found at any vitamin or gourmet food store)
- Wiping your eyes with cotton dipped in warm salt water
- Consuming a spoon of gooseberry powder with honey before bed (found at specialty vitamin and food stores)
- Bayberry bark (found at specialty vitamin and food stores)

"Over-the-counter medications such as topical antihistamines and mast cell stabilizers can also be used," Myers says. "If these do not alleviate the symptoms you should seek care from an eye-care professional. Prescription anti-inflammatory, mast cell stabilizers, and anti-histamines may be required."