Seasonal Allergy Survival Guide

Many migraine sufferers also suffer allergies. New research suggests that allergies and migraines share the same biochemical pathways and are triggered by the same underlying causes. In fact, the “sinus” headaches experienced by the majority of allergy patients are actually migraines. While researchers continue to explore the link between migraines and allergies, here are some natural allergy-fighting tips that might also help you reduce your migraine days.

**Clear away dust and germs.** Use furnace, air conditioning and vacuum cleaner filters – and keep them clean. Installing an air purification system on your home heating and cooling system can also reduce airborne allergens. Dust mites and germs can make allergies worse, so keep surfaces clean and vacuum crevices in your furniture and around baseboards. Use zippered pillow and mattress cases and wash your bedding once a week in hot water.

**Balance the humidity.** Make sure the air in your home or office isn’t too dry. A furnace humidifier can help. During allergy season, running a cool-mist vaporizer in the bedroom at night and during the day in your office can be very beneficial.

**Control outdoor exposure.** In the fall, delegate leaf raking to reduce your contact with mold and try to avoid hiking, running or biking through areas with high concentrations of goldenrod and ragweed. Remove shoes before entering your home. Shower in the evening to wash off any allergens before you settle into bed.

**Eat seasonally.** Seasonal foods can pack an allergy-fighting punch! In fall, for example, load up on broccoli (vitamin C), kale (vitamin A), pumpkins (carotenoids) and onions and garlic which are loaded with inflammation-fighting quercitin.

**Consider natural supplements.** Magnesium is known to reduce bronchial spasms and inflammation that causes the immune system to produce histamine. Detoxified butterbur (the Petadolex® formulation) is shown to be as effective as a popular antihistamine drug in controlling symptoms of hay fever and grass allergies. Both magnesium and Petadolex® butterbur are also recommended as migraine preventatives. Too much of a good thing – even a natural antihistamine – can be a bad thing. So, as with all supplements, talk with your doctor about what’s right for you.