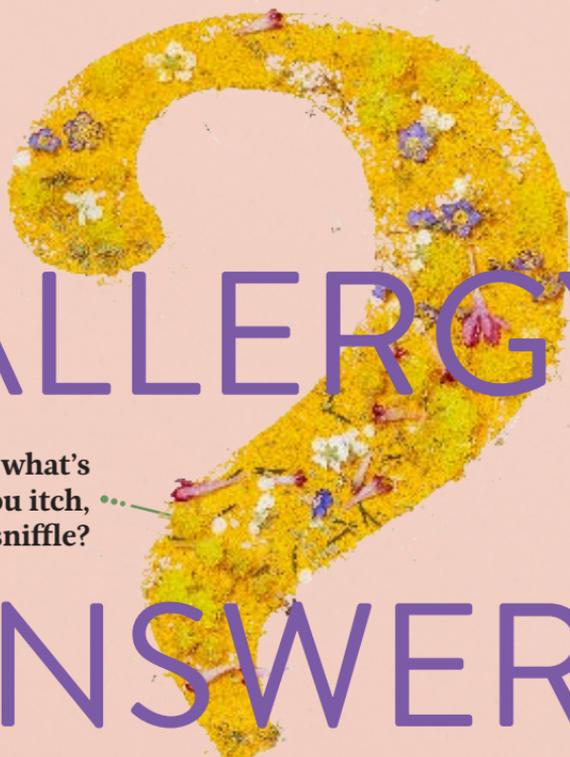


DR. OZ THE GOOD LIFE

# Handbook

Feel-Better Tips | MAY 2016



ALLERGY

Confused by what's making you itch, sneeze, and snuffle?

ANSWERS

Figure it all out and find your fixes inside.

SPRING IS SAVED!

BY LAUREL LEICHT PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARKO METZINGER

**FIRST QUESTION...**

# DO I HAVE ALLERGIES OR A COLD?

The symptoms can be similar, but to get better you need to know what's making you feel crummy.

START HERE

YOUR MAIN PROBLEM IS

*fever or aches*

*a runny nose*

*sneezing or itchy eyes or nose*

YOUR MUCUS LOOKS

**COLD**

*thick, yellow, or green*

*thin and clear*

YOUR SYMPTOMS HAVE LASTED

For advice on kicking a cold, go to [drozthegoodlife.com/get-well-guide](http://drozthegoodlife.com/get-well-guide).

THEY COME ON

*less than two weeks*

*weeks, maybe months*

*once in a while*

*same season every year*

**ALLERGIES**

Looks like you've come to the right place! Flip the page for tips that'll help you feel better, stat.



**AAH, RELIEF!**

# WHICH MED SHOULD I CHOOSE?

**First try...**

## A NASAL STEROID

These prescription and OTC sprays (Nasonex or Flonase, for instance) are the most effective for treating a runny, itchy nose, sneezing, and congestion due to seasonal allergies as long as you're consistent and use them daily. Don't expect symptoms to clear immediately; it can take at least a week before relief kicks in.

**If you're still suffering, reach for...**

## ANTIHISTAMINES

They're your second line of defense if a nasal steroid isn't enough or if it triggers yucky nose-bleeds. Experts recommend newer versions, such as Claritin or Alavert, which are less likely to make you drowsy. (Older formulas, including Benadryl, are best for bedtime.) But if a stuffy nose is giving you grief too, an antihistamine alone won't help. Look for one that's combined with a decongestant (like Allegra-D).

**For a more natural option, try...**

## A SALINE WASH

Whether you choose a spray or a neti pot, flushing allergens out of your nose with salt water improves symptoms such as itching and stuffiness. Research also shows that some people are able to cut back on their allergy medication dosage when they use a saline treatment.

## **Should I get allergy shots?**

If you can relate to at least one of the problems below, talk to an allergist about whether weekly injections could be right for you.

- ▶ **Traditional medicines don't ease my symptoms.**
- ▶ **Side effects prevent me from taking most allergy drugs.**
- ▶ **I have asthma, too.**
- ▶ **Allergies affect me year-round.**

## **I'm scared of shots. Is there another option?**

You may be in luck. People with certain grass or ragweed allergies can try immunotherapy tablets, which help the immune system become less sensitive over time. Bonus: There's no need to haul yourself to the doctor's office weekly. After the first dose, the tablets, which dissolve under the tongue, are taken at home.

ALWAYS ASK A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL ABOUT YOUR SPECIFIC MEDICAL NEEDS. THIS INFORMATION IS NOT INDIVIDUAL MEDICAL ADVICE AND MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR YOU.



**When using a nasal steroid spray, keep your head upright (don't tilt it back) and aim the spray toward the outer wall of each nostril.**

### **Early Action**

*Many allergy drugs work best when you start them before you have symptoms. Head off problems; when your allergies kick in this season, set an alert on your calendar to begin medicating a few weeks in advance next year.*

## FAQs

### HOW DO I KNOW WHAT I'M ALLERGIC TO?

For starters, pay attention to the time of year when you experience symptoms. Get sneezy in early spring? Try looking up to find the perp: Tree pollen is the issue in many regions at this time of year. Any tree can cause allergies, but birch and oak are two big culprits. (Weeds tend to be more of a problem in the late summer and fall.) The best tactic, though, is to see a board-certified allergist for a skin prick test to determine *exactly* what's irritating you. Antihistamines can skew results, so ask if you should avoid them for two or more days before your appointment.

### I'VE STARTED SNIFFLING AND SNEEZING FOR THE FIRST TIME. COULD I HAVE DEVELOPED ALLERGIES AS AN ADULT?

It's absolutely possible. For one thing, allergies may be caused by repeated exposure to pollen over the years. Climate change can be another factor. Not only do warmer temps extend the time plants are in bloom, exposing you to more allergens than you've been used to, but when there's a rapid change in weather, trees release a supersize burst of pollen. That's why last year's *slightly* itchy nose could be this year's nightmare.

### SHOULD I SKIP MY WORKOUTS WHEN MY ALLERGIES ARE ACTING UP?

Nice try, but no. Your sweat sessions may actually help. One small study found that 30 minutes of moderate exercise can decrease symptoms by more than 70%. Some experts think physical activity might aid in calming allergy-related inflammation—just move workouts indoors when the pollen count is high (more on that at right).

### **What does pollen count mean?**

Weather forecasters throw the term around but rarely explain it. So here goes: It measures how much pollen was in the air during the past 24 hours. While yesterday's count is a useful guide, today's weather plays a larger role in how you'll feel.

► **Wind is pollen's mode of transport; breezy days mean there's probably more of the allergen floating around.**

► **Rain washes pollen particles out of the air, lowering the count dramatically.**

If yesterday was drizzly, the pollen forecast may read low. But keep in mind that if today the rain is gone, the sun's shining, and there's a little wind, the current count is likely higher.

A collection of white tissues and a bouquet of white daisies on a yellow background. Three tissues are scattered around the bouquet, which is at the bottom of the frame. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

### **Not Just a Spring Fling**

*So much for “seasonal” allergies. Pollen is a problem during both summer and fall, and doctors see patients for treatment during the winter, too.*

**An allergist can help you skip the tissues and enjoy the blooms.**



Some allergy meds can dry out the eyes. If your peepers need a moisture boost, use artificial tears for relief from that gritty feeling.

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### ***Nope, you can't move away from allergies***

People tend to develop new allergies after they relocate. However, there can be a honeymoon period, when symptoms disappear for a season or two. So soak up the sneeze-free spell, then figure out a new allergy attack plan.