

The Doctor Game – W. Gifford-Jones M.D.

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I hated Picking Peaches....

Do you remember the line in the musical “Showboat”, the one that says, “It’s summertime and the living is easy”? Maybe it is for some people. But the worst summer I ever endured was during World War II. We all had to contribute to the war effort and mine was to pick peaches on a farm. But for years I had suffered from Hay Fever! Peaches and their fuzz were a Perfect Storm! Could I have avoided this allergy today?

It’s estimated that 40 million North Americans now suffer from mild to severe allergies. Worse still, for some people, the allergy season never ends. And although there are several factors that trigger these allergic reactions, the main cause is pollen.

The National Allergy Bureau reports that measurements from 15 to 90 particles per cubic meter is a moderate level of pollen, 90 to 1500 as high, and anything above this amount as very high. These levels are more than enough to cause runny noses, watery eyes, itchy throats and make you feel like death warmed over.

Pollen is also hard to escape wherever you live. One allergy expert in Calgary told me that last summer was the worst experienced in Canada for many years. One day there were 3,000 pollen grains per cubic meter recorded in several regions of the country. These are days that are good for allergists, but the rest of us would prefer to be living at the North Pole.

The bad news is that studies show allergies and sensitivities have increased dramatically in our lifetime. In fact, chronic allergies have increased so much that allergy has become a costly part of our health care system.

So, apart from reaching for Kleenex, what can you do? Some people are lucky that they can move to a better climate. Or have the luxury of staying more often in an air-conditioned environment. But when you’re picking peaches all you can do is rub your eyes, keep sneezing, wish you were anywhere else, and hope the day will soon end.

So what creates this hell? Symptoms start when mast cells in the blood release a cascade of chemicals, including histamine, in response to pollen. So, one of the time-honored treatments has been the use of antihistamine drugs. But these can cause drowsiness, so I might fall off the ladder while picking peaches.

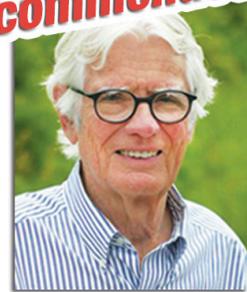
Today there’s a good chance I could have worked on the farm without this torment. Dr. John Wilkinson, Senior Herbal Medicine Lecturer at Middlesex University, London, England, says the answer to our toxic world is plant sterols. But like vitamin C they are not manufactured by the human body.

So how could I have ingested plant sterols, to boost my immunity against this allergic reaction? Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. For instance, 3 ounces of unprocessed plant food contains 4,200 milligrams of sterols. But when companies convert this into flour, 90 percent of sterol is lost! It’s another price we pay for civilization.

We can obtain sterols by eating increased amounts of grains, vegetables, fruits, legumes and seeds. Research has also shown that regular exercise can bolster the immune system by stimulating the body’s natural killer cells.

Today I could also reach for a natural remedy called Immuno-Care, available in Health Food Stores. One capsule contains 300 milligrams of plant sterols. It also contains powerful antioxidants containing high levels of proanthocyanadins and flavonoids to temper pollen and other irritants.

Recommended by



W. Gifford-Jones M.D.

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