

## **ACUPUNCTURE FOR HAYFEVER, RHINITIS AND ASTHMA**

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After our cool, wet winter the plants will be abundant this spring. But instead of sealing up the windows and stocking up on antihistamines, why not book a course of acupuncture, and enjoy the scents and the blossoms?

The World Health Organisation and 'Allergy' journal agree that acupuncture significantly reduces the symptoms of hay fever (pollen-allergic rhinitis). W.H.O. states that acupuncture is more cost-effective and better at controlling symptoms than over-the-counter antihistamines. In worldwide studies, over twice the number of people reported their symptoms improved or completely gone after acupuncture, compared to the control groups. Acupuncture was also proven to prevent, delay and reduce symptom onset.



Acupuncture helps restore healthy balance to your body, strengthening your energy, and immune system, thereby reducing sensitivity to allergens. If acupuncture is given at the initial onset of hay fever or asthma, the problem may never even recur.

Ideally, book your first appointment four weeks in advance of when your trigger allergen appears. For example, if April's mimosa pollen sets you off, make an appointment for March. That way, the acupuncture (whether needles or 'no-needle' treatment), starts working to strengthen your defences against the irritant.

You would attend once weekly for four sessions, then, depending on your symptoms during the actual season, once or twice weekly for another six to eight sessions. The effect of acupuncture is cumulative, so if you attend regularly before each season, the

amount of treatments you require should become less, and your symptoms should also be less severe each time; some people may just need a couple of pre-season 'top-ups'.

The important thing is to pre-empt the problem. But it's human nature to procrastinate - until you're miserable with an alternately bunged and running nose, itchy, streaming eyes, tickly cough, wheezy chest and headaches! Obviously, by that time, when you're taking pills and sprays which only dry up the secretions and make you feel dopey and drowsy, it takes longer for your acupuncturist to get your body back to equilibrium.

If you leave it late into the hay fever season to seek help, don't be surprised if your symptoms and secretions seem to worsen after the first treatments. It's well worth a few days with a hankie stuck under your nose to 'push through to the other side' of wellness! Don't stop the treatment, and the next year prevent it happening at all by making acupuncture one of your achievable New Year's resolutions - keep a reminder in your diary! If you suffer annually from hay fever, chronic sinusitis or rhinitis, bronchitis or asthma, then do yourself a favour, and try it.

Acupuncture, as you know from my previous articles, can help a wide variety of physical and nervous disorders in a natural, holistic manner: improving your symptoms, boosting your overall health and well-being. And for fidgety children or those who are 'needle-shy', there is a range of non-invasive methods of stimulating acupuncture points, ensuring treatment is suitable for everyone.