



Hayfever

Traditional Chinese medicine pays close attention to the yearly seasonal changes.

Spring represents a time of growth, movement and change. Moving from the harsh features of winter into spring can be a positive force revitalising our energy.

However, not all that spring brings can be as cheerful as the early morning chirping song birds. Due to Victoria being a garden state and spring typically being windy, many suffer the nasty symptoms of hay fever.

What is hayfever?

Hayfever, or rhinitis, is an allergic reaction to pollen or dust. It causes a histamine response by the body which elicits the painful and annoying symptoms of sneezing, itchy and watering eyes; not to mention headaches and sinus congestion.

Of course we can temporarily treat these symptoms with antihistamines and nasal decongestants and they may just make getting through the day bearable. But there are some Chinese medicine approaches which might prevent the hayfever attacks from occurring in the first place.

Both acupuncture and Chinese herbs can with great benefits be used to strengthen the immune system and thereby treat the root cause of the hayfever as well as alleviate the nasty symptoms.

Acupuncture

There are several specific acupuncture points used for hayfever. They are located close to sinus cavities and on the hands and feet. Acupuncture is a fantastic pain free and drug free treatment. As little as one or two acupuncture treatments can deliver great relief

Chinese herbal medicine

“Internal heat” is often the Chinese medicine body pattern associated with hay fever. Chinese herbal medicine assists in rebalancing the body and will help in clearing patterns such as heat, which are contributing to the symptoms of hay fever.

Chinese herbal medicine comes in many different forms such as:

- **Dried raw herbs** for brewing – many practitioners still use raw herbs, which are generally very effective but can be time consuming to prepare
- **Tablets** - often a patent formula purchased over the counter from a specialised herbal shop can bring great relief such as ‘Pe Min Kan Wan’. We stock some great patent formula tablets at the Gardenvale Clinic.
- **Dissolvable granules** – a formula specifically tailored to each individual. Dissolvable granules have much more pleasant taste than dried herbs and are a ‘fuss free’ approach to taking Chinese Herbs. It’s as easy as making instant coffee!!

Some common sense

- Make sure you drink plenty of **water** through out the day. **Dehydration** places significant stress on the body which may exacerbate hayfever symptoms.
- According to Chinese medicine, **environmental wind** can place the sinus cavities under pressure. Avoid being out in the wind excessively, particularly if there is a lot of flora in blossom.
- If you’re suffering from sneezing and itchy eyes, try flushing the nostrils and washing the eyes with a mild **saline solution**. This will help prevent any further discomfort and avoid a possible sinus infection.

As spring begins to get a little warmer heading towards summer, try drinking a little chrysanthemum or peppermint tea, particularly in the afternoon. These herbs will nourish the liver and help keep you hydrated.