



Acupuncture – a natural and effective solution for seasonal allergies

Allergy season is here. The abundant growth of spring can be extremely uncomfortable if you're one of the many who has sensitivity to nature causing a battle with runny nose, sneezing, itchy red eyes even asthma due to antigens in the air.

There are actually two types: Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis and Perennial Allergic Rhinitis. The first one is caused by pollen particles while the other one is caused by dust, animal dander, dust mites and such.

The allergic response occurs when the antigen enters the nasal cavity, interacts with antibodies and subsequently histamine is released from the cells which line the nasal cavity. When the histamine is released, it stimulates the nerve endings and sneezing results within minutes. This is followed by increased nasal secretion and eventually blockage of the nasal passage.

According to Chinese Medicine, the symptoms and signs that reflect the Western diagnosis of allergies relate to imbalances in the meridian and organ systems of the body. Over time, if these imbalances remain within the body, they will affect the functions of the organ systems that are involved in the production of protective Qi. In order to sustain a healthy body, it is important to have the correct quality and quantity of protective Qi circulating through the body via pathways called Meridians. The concept of protective Qi is similar to the Western concept of the immune system. Protective Qi functions to protect and defend the body against foreign invaders that can lead to the common cold and allergies. When protective Qi is strong and abundant, we remain healthy. When the supply of protective Qi becomes inadequate, our health is compromised and we become vulnerable to foreign invaders such as: dust, mold, animal dander, bacteria, viruses, pollens, etc. Because of the constitutional deficiency of defensive Qi, the body is unable to ward off the antigen, which then gets lodged in the nose causing allergic reaction. This resulting manifestation is considered a "wind invasion".

There are two important factors in the treatment of allergies with Traditional Chinese Medicine. One is to treat the root cause; the deficient protective Qi, the other is to treat the manifestation; wind invasion. By boosting the immunity with acupuncture and herbal medicine, we can help cultivate the protective Qi, thereby preventing the allergies. This approach is the primary treatment when there is not a flare up of symptoms. When the allergic reaction begins, the main treatment will be to dislodge the 'wind invasion' to open the nose and prevent the production of nasal secretions.

With the implementation of both treatments your over sensitive nose can be a thing of the past. The season of change can be pleasant and welcome. You'll even enjoy a newfound love of gardening, hiking or landscaping in the refreshing open air!