

Hanson on health

SHAKE THE FEVER

Health writer and nutritionist Sarah Hanson suggests food to help beat hay fever

Most of us welcome the spring, with its warmer weather and the delicious smells of freshly cut grass. But for hay fever sufferers it marks the start of a miserable few months of sneezing, a runny nose and itchy, watery eyes. The identified cause of hay fever, also known as seasonal allergic rhinitis, is an allergic reaction to pollen. This reaction produces a chemical called histamine, which is why hay fever is usually treated with antihistamines. But traditional medicines only offer a temporary solution and can have side effects, such as drowsiness and fatigue.

The good news is that there are a number of alternatives that can offer relief. A good place to start is to strengthen the immune system, with a diet packed with **fruit and vegetables**, moderate activity and relaxation (stress weakens the immune system).

If you don't think you're getting all the nutrients you need from your diet, then a good multivitamin and mineral complex containing vitamins A, C and E, betacarotene, selenium and zinc can help increase your resistance. It is worth paying more for better quality supplements, which are more easily absorbed.

Vitamin C, along with nutrients known as bioflavonoids (for example quercetin found in **onions and garlic**) have been found to lower histamine levels. Calcium and magnesium can also help alleviate symptoms. One German study looking at the influence of the dietary intake of fats and antioxidants on hay fever found that the omega 3 fats found in oily fish, such as **salmon and mackerel**, relieved the symptoms of hay fever, while increasing vitamin E (also contained in these oily fish) also helped.

It may also be worth giving up dairy products for a time to see if this makes a difference. Dairy products such as **cow's milk, cheese and ice cream** encourage mucus production and avoiding them can help clear the airways and relieve hay fever symptoms. Eat well and you might still make the most of summer.



A group of award-winning photojournalists keen to prove their fine art credentials have launched Gallery F, an online gallery selling limited edition signed prints. Work includes Zak Waters's *Liberation* (above), part of a series called *Birdmen*, looking at the world of pigeon racing. www.galleryf.com

**WINE
TRY BEFORE YOU BUY**

The moment you walk into The Sampler you know it's not like other wine shops. Not only are the wines arranged by grape variety rather than region or country of origin, but bottles are lined up in gleaming silver dispensers. Started by wine enthusiasts Jamie Hutchinson and Dawn Mannis—without a day's experience in the trade between them—The Sampler relies on the idea of retail as entertainment.

The Sampler is built around the 10 sampling machines, which make 80 wines available to taste. Customers buy a sampling card at the till and use up the money with each sample. Prices vary from as little as 28p for a 25ml sample, right up to £20 for 25ml of some of the "wine icons".

"The idea behind the wine icons is that people are able to try wines they wouldn't normally be able to afford," says Hutchinson, a self-confessed "wine nerd".

As Mannis says, people can taste at their leisure. "The beauty of this is that people don't need to know about wine. They don't need a member of staff hovering over them. They can try stuff and make their own mind up." With a wine club and in-store tasting events the High Street wine shop may never be the same.

www.thesampler.co.uk

