

Is it an Allergy or a Cold?

Summer is such a wonderful and exciting time of the year. But all too often we hear folks are being plagued with a Summer cold. OR is it?

Allergies (aka Allergic Rhinitis) also abound in the summer time. All those plants are blooming, and sending millions of pollen particles into the air. This natural process is needed to produce all those beautiful flowering plants and provide us with food too.

Although folks do get colds in the summer, more then likely you are having some sort of allergic reaction to an unknown plant pollen (some folks do know what triggers their reactions). And just because you have never had an allergic reaction in the past, doesn't make you exempt from becoming allergic in the future. Actually, it is quite common for allergies to develop after you are in your mid 30's to 40's.

In either case, the body's immune system is alerted and responds to colds and allergies very similarly. Itchy watery eyes, scratchy throats, sneezing. Both sound alike. Typically you don't run any type of a fever with allergies, but you can have a slight fever with a cold.

Now, depending on how your body reacts to the allergen and other contributing factors (i.e. weather conditions, amount of time you spend outdoors and more) will help to determine if it is an allergy or a cold.

Colds usually start out with a scratchy throat and you feel tired, you might have the chills. With an Allergy you get the scratchy throat, but it is rare you feel tired or have the chills. With either you can have a headache and develop a nagging tickle in your throat and cough.

Colds run their course in about 7-10 days (unless you develop secondary problems). Allergies can go on for weeks depending on the allergen(s). So if you have a true cold, know it will be over soon, the first few days you feel the worse, but gradually you feel better.

With allergies you have scratchy throat, watery eyes and sneezing that continues day in and day out. Just ask anyone that knows they have allergies especially Hay Fever. Hay Fever is the most common allergy this time of the year. They have good days and bad (just let it rain and wash the pollen out of the air and symptoms improve for the allergy sufferer until things dry out again.)

Secondary bacterial infections can develop with either and cause sinusitis and in the worse cases, bronchitis.

Essential oils can make you feel better in either case. Since many essential oils help the immune system and relieve symptoms, and help prevent secondary bacterial infections. Using Eucalyptus globulus or Peppermint for congestion and discomfort will certainly make you feel better. There are many essential oils used to work on any of the symptoms associated with allergies and colds. (If you have a symptom and not sure what oils are useful go to <http://birchhillhappenings.com/aroma1.htm#table> and find our "Google Search box" type in your concern and it will give you a list of articles written to help you with any your symptoms.)

Any essential oil with Anti-histamine properties can help either problem. But if you have true allergies, they can help before the allergy season begins too. Essential oils with anti-histaminic anti-inflammatory properties include: German Chamomile, Roman Chamomile, Helichrysum, Rose, and Neroli. Others such as Lavender and Geranium also will help to a lesser degree. Our Allergy Tamer blend is best used this time of the year. Not only will it lessen the reaction, but will help once the symptoms begin.

Penny uses Allergy Tamer and Roman Chamomile for her severe allergy to Ragweed and has been using it for several years. She starts now and inhales 2 -3 inhalations 2-3 times a day. It keeps her symptoms at a minimum. For her, allergy season lasts from August into October, so I inhale these regularly throughout this time. Essential oils are better than using those inhaled steroidal and other drugs for allergies as they don't produce all those other side affects!

When using essential oils for either colds or allergic rhinitis (hay fever) they should be inhaled or diffused.

Personal inhalers work the best while out in the working world and at home when you are busy during the day. But at night using a fan type diffuser in the bedroom will give the most relief or if you would like the essential oil to be just near your side of the bed, use a Terra Cotta disc diffuser. There are many diffuser options for your particular needs. (How about a necklace if you don't like an inhaler? We have styles for men too (See the Terra cotta pendants page <http://birchhillhappenings.com/jewelry2.htm>)

If you need more help, please send us an e-mail and we will gladly help you with your allergy OR your cold!!

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