

## SEASONAL ALLERGIES

Respiratory allergies are a major health problem for many people worldwide. Epidemiologic data indicate that the incidence of allergies is continuing to rise.<sup>1</sup> Experts estimate that allergic rhinitis affects 20% of all adults and 40 % of children in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> Allergic rhinitis is a leading cause of doctor visits and missed work/school due to chronic illness.<sup>2</sup> Approximately 16.7 million physician office visits per year are attributed to allergic rhinitis.<sup>2,3</sup>

Allergies are due to an overreaction of the immune system to environmental substances. Respiratory allergies can be caused by almost any airborne particle, but the most common triggers are animal dander, feathers, fabrics, dust, molds and pollen.<sup>4</sup> Allergic rhinitis caused by a reaction to plant pollen is also known as hay fever.<sup>4</sup>

When an allergen enters the respiratory system of susceptible individuals, it triggers an allergic response. Cells called mast cells (a type of white blood cell) release histamine, which sets off a series of events that cause swelling and inflammation.<sup>5</sup> In allergic rhinitis, the resulting symptoms include mucus production, sneezing, congestion, runny nose and itchy, watery eyes.

Allergic rhinitis can affect individuals throughout the year but is particularly prevalent during the spring season (from late May to the end of June) and is referred to as seasonal allergic rhinitis. Respiratory allergies can occur in conjunction with, and contribute to the development of, other conditions. These include asthma and sinusitis.

Nature's Sunshine offers a variety of products that are commonly recommended to support the respiratory system as it battles seasonal allergies.

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### References:

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