

# The Wellness Express

Jump on the train to good health

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## Can Allergies Be Treated with Chiropractic?

Presented by: Fox Valley Chiropractic

Spring is in the air. Flowers are budding. Leaves are growing. And the days are getting longer. That's terrific, right?

Unfortunately for many of us, when we hear "Spring is in the air," our minds focus on months of runny noses, itchy eyes and sneezing. We're more likely to grab a handful of tissues than stop and smell the flowers.

Hay fever erupts this time of year. Millions of us suffer from this condition, which causes the body to become hypersensitive to pollen and other environmental substances. This condition causes a number of irritating symptoms that can make life miserable.

Hay fever is one of many allergies. An allergy is a hypersensitivity reaction: when you react to a substance that is considered to be harmless to most other people. Skin reactions, breathing difficulty and irritations to the sinuses are some of the most frequent allergy symptoms. If you have a food allergy, then problems like bloating, indigestion and diarrhea may result.



### What Causes Allergic Reactions?

Your immune system recognizes and removes harmful substances from your body. Inflammation, sneezing, coughing and vomiting are methods the immune system uses to expel any dangerous substance ingested by you.

However, an allergic response is when your immune system activates against a substance that is usually considered harmless. Essentially, the allergic reaction is caused not by the substance itself but by your body's interpretation the substance is potentially harmful.

### What Happens Inside the Body?

When an allergic reaction starts, the body activates special immune cells called mast cells. On the surface of their membranes, these mast cells possess receptors that recognize substances considered either harmful or helpful to the body. When harmful substances are detected, the cells release histamines. These chemicals sensitize the body to react, which then attempts to remove harmful substances by sneezing, coughing, etc.

### Exercise of the Week

Pelvic Tilt

Difficulty: Easy

*(Consult your chiropractor before starting this or any other exercise.)*

**Start:** Lie down on back with legs bent 90 degrees and feet on floor. Place fingertips on abdomen, just inside pointy tips of pelvic bones.

**Exercise:** Drawing belly button toward spine, try to flatten lower back without letting abdomen bulge outward. Hold for 1-2 counts, then release. Perform 10-15 repetitions.



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## Why Do People Get Allergies?

No one knows for sure why people become allergic to relatively harmless substances.

One theory about allergies suggests that your body is hypersensitive if you're a hypersensitive person. For example, if you have a high sensitivity to stress, your body also reflects this sensitivity. Since the body and the mind are connected entities, this theory makes sense. Stress reduction techniques designed to improve mind-body interactions are often successful in reducing this problem. The end result is a lessening of allergic symptoms in some patients.<sup>1,2</sup>

Another theory is that an allergic reaction is an interpretation of your environment. In order to interpret, your body must first get information. The nervous system is part of this information-gathering function of the body. If your nervous system is dysfunctional, then the information interpreted will be altered, and this makes you vulnerable to abnormal reactions like allergies.



## Can Chiropractic Help with Allergies?

Since the beneficial effects of chiropractic adjustments on the nervous system are well documented, it's not surprising many chiropractic patients report a reduction of allergy symptoms when treated regularly for vertebral subluxations. Misalignment or dysfunctional movements of vertebra can cause a focal irritation in the spine, which then creates an abnormal signal received by the central nervous system. When this aberrant signal occurs along the same pathway required for the input of normal environmental messages, the body may not interpret the information correctly. When this occurs, an allergic reaction can result.

Although scientific research shows chiropractic adjustments do not cause an improvement in all allergy cases, they're definitely beneficial for some.<sup>3</sup> The reason for the inconsistency may be because there are a number of different causes for a patient's hypersensitivity. Vertebral subluxation is only one of many potential causes.

If you suffer allergies, consider chiropractic as one of your potential options. Even if it does not result in a reduction of your allergic symptoms, removing subluxations from your spine has several positive effects on your nervous system. And that makes chiropractic adjustments worthwhile.



## Quote of the Week

"Those who do not find time for exercise will have to find time for illness."

- Hippocrate

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