

Bee Pollen May Be Helpful To Our Common Allergies

Pollen afflicts a quarter of the U.S population, so it may seem ludicrous that people consume allergy-producing substance such as bee pollen. Yet millions eat bee pollen safely on a daily basis. No valid research exists to connect food allergies to airborne allergies, nor is there any solid evidence to demonstrate that people with specific pollen allergies will have an allergic response after eating bee pollen, because the two mechanisms are entirely different.

Fact: Millions of people worldwide consume bee pollen safely. In many cases they show a remarkable improvement in pollen allergies. Also, there is a popular 'misconception' that in order to get relief from hay-fever allergy, local bee pollen must be ingested. They say, that by ingesting the same pollen as that which afflicts you offers you a homeopathic-type of relief.

This does not make sense if you consider that on a local level, there are two types of pollen involved: the anemophilous, and the entomophilous pollens. The anemophilous pollens are very light & usually come from grass or trees. These are easily blown about by the wind and need no insect activity to cross-pollinate. These pollens are what we breathe in & are the major cause of our pollen allergies.

The entomophilous pollens are much heavier and stickier and are not so readily windblown. In fact, without the industrious bee, cross-fertilization from plant to plant would be scant. These highly nutritious pollens are gathered by the bees from flowering plants and brought back to the hive in pollen baskets on the back of their legs. They are the bee's primary source of protein and other nutrients. They are what we call "bee pollen" even though bees collect the pollen from plants and they do not produce it. "Entomophile" means "Friend of the insects."

Research into why bee pollen might have a positive effect on pollen allergies is scarce and inconclusive, several hypotheses have been raised. Bee pollen may be effective against airborne allergies and hay fever because it is a nutrient dense food with positive effects on the overall immune system. Another possible mechanism may be that it contains the bioflavonoid quercetin. So as quercetin inhibits the release of histamine in the body, therefore, it may contribute to decreasing the allergic response to the airborne allergens.

In the Jackson study, oral bee pollen produced a 100 % improvement in a third of the asthma patients, a 75% improvement in another third of the patients, and a 50% in 11% of patients. 78% of asthma patients averaged a 75% improvement. In another Jackson study, oral bee pollen produced a 100% improvement in 18% of hay-fever patients, a 75% improvement in 34%, and 50% improvement in 20%.

As a former Director of Nutrition & Herbology at a large Environmental Illness/Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Clinic, I have successfully used bee pollen as part of my protocol program for treating many patients with allergies, as they by nature are hypersensitive or they are universal reactors, yet, they responded well to bee pollen. I recommend ingesting small amounts of bee pollen and then gradually increasing the dosage. Clients were best advised to start taking bee pollen at least one to three months before the beginning of their hay-fever or allergy season.

I also recommend the bee keepers to conduct microbial and mold and mildew contamination testing on their product before they sell it to the public. I believe that many reactions to bee pollen may not be to the pollen at all but to the contamination resulting from poor or improper drying or storage. Bee pollen that has not dried properly or was stored correctly may contain excess moisture that may attract mold or mildew which may not be apparent to the eye.

Most people with allergies or hay-fever can safely ingest bee pollen that has been harvested and dried properly. Either esophageal & stomach acids neutralize the allergenic substances, or the pollen sensitive areas appear to be mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and throat. Test a granule or two under the tongue. If itching occurs go to a capsule forum to bypass the mucous membranes. Gradually increase the intake to the desired level.

Many people believe if they are allergic to bee stings (venom) they cannot take bee pollen. Yet, in my experience, those who are allergic to bee venom do benefit from the pollen bees get from flowers. Pollen is a very different substance than venom.

For advice: Seek Steven Schechter, N.D., a naturopathic doctor, consultant, speaker & medical Journalist. He is author of best selling book, "Fighting Radiation & Chemical Pollutants with Foods, Herbs & Pollutants with Foods, Herbs & Vitamins (Vitality Ink, Encinitas, CA). He practices in Encinitas & is available for ph. consultations with people from across the U.S...

My source of information for this article is following:

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- 2: Stanley R.G., H.F. Linkens. Pollen, Biochemistry and Management, New York; Springer Verlag, 1974, p.230-235.
- 3: Hallet, F.P. & L.M. Parks. "A Note on the Isolation of Quercetin from Euphorbia pitulifera I." Am. Pharm. Assn. 1950, p 56.
- 4: Hope, W.C. et. "Short Communications-In vitro of the biosynthesis of slow reaction substance of anaphylaxis (SRS-A) and lipoxygenase activity by quercetin." Biochem. Pharmacol. 32(9): 367-371. 1983.
- 5: Middleton, E.Jr. et. Al. "Quercetin: an inhibitor of antigen-induced human basophil histamine release." J. Immunol. 127-546, 1981.
- 6: Jackson, et. Al. Bee Pollen Review, Int. J. Biosocial Research-Vol.5 (1):47-52,1983.
- 7: Cohen, et. Al "Acute allergic reaction at composite pollen ingestion: J. Allerg. Clin. Immunol. 64(4):20-274. 1979.

PS: I, Emily Dotson - had allergies in 1970 so bad that I wore a mask over my nose, but after taking Bee Pollen my allergies left and they never returned.