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LIFESTYLE

Goodnight Allergies: How to Prevent Nasal Congestion at Night

By Lifestyle on May 21, 2019 at 12:38 PM

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There's no denying it; spring has "sprung" in the Bay area. Flowers are blooming, the days are longer and no doubt, your allergies are getting noticeably worse at night.

Even if it was possible to **live in an allergy-free place**, the laws of the universe sometimes work against us in our fight against nasal congestion at night. And there are reasons for that.

Learn more here about nasal congestion at night and what you can do about it. Follow these steps today to help make sure every night is a "good night's sleep."

Reasons For Nighttime Congestion

The real culprit for **nasal congestion symptoms** is inflamed or engorged blood vessels inside your nasal passageway. Nasal congestion is caused by anything that irritates our nasal tissues. A stuffy nose at night is caused a number of unique reasons that don't affect us during the day.

When we lie down to sleep at night, we experience a natural increase in blood pressure. An increased amount of blood flows to the upper portion of our body like our head and face. As a result, this increased blood flow inflames our nasal passageways.

A horizontal position also makes it harder to clear mucous from our nose and sinus cavity. When we stand during the day, gravity works to make sure mucous is pulled down from our nose and into the back of our throat to get swallowed. Many times, we aren't even aware that this is happening.

During our sleeping hours, mucous gets backed up behind our throats. Most people will notice that the mucous disappears and their congestion clears after they've been up for an hour or two in the morning. That means gravity is doing its job.

Allergies and Nasal Congestion at Night

An allergic reaction is your body's way to generate antibodies that fight off invading allergens such as pollen, pet dander or other particles. Your **body's immune system** works double time to generate these antibodies. As a result of your body's overreaction to these invaders, you'll soon have a runny nose, cough, and itchy or watery eyes.

The body's production of allergy-fighting hormones also drops, depending on where you are in the sleep-wake cycle. When we are wide awake, our bodies produce more allergy-fighting hormones. When it's time for bed, the production levels of these hormones start to fall and leave the body susceptible to allergies at night.

There are other factors that make allergies worse at night. Dust mites, for example, are usually concentrated in pillows and mattresses. That means you are exposed to them all night long. The continuous hours of exposure may create disruptive allergic reactions.

Preventing Nighttime Congestion

If you're suffering from nighttime congestion, that doesn't mean you have to resign yourself to sleepless nights. There are some **home care tips** and other personal habits that you can incorporate into your bedtime routine to get a better night's sleep.

Home Care Tips

Here are some easy changes you can incorporate inside your home to fight off allergies at night.

Buy an Air Filter System

Air filters are appliances that reduce the number of pollutants and allergens floating through the air within a constricted space (i.e., your bedroom.) **Air filter installation** can also remove mold and other contaminants that make allergies worse at night.

Air filtering systems operate by either active or passive technology. Active air filters disperse electrically charged ions to help trap allergens inside the air filter. Passive air technology use fans inside the unit to draw in air from the room to filter and clean it before dispersing it back inside the room.

Replace Your Bedding and Bed Pillows

Blankets and comforters are magnets for allergens like pet hair and mites. You can replace your old comforters and sheets with allergy and asthma friendly materials made from hypoallergenic or natural fabrics. Other allergy friendly bedding materials include memory foam and microfiber.

If you haven't done this in a while, you should also replace your bed pillows every two years to remove any concentrations of dust or allergens that might have accumulated. Switch your old pillows for new, 100% cotton pillows. These softer pillows can help reduce dust and other contaminants that might build up over time.

You should also arrange your bed pillows in a way that elevates your head at night when you sleep. This change in sleeping position will help slow down the blood flow to your sinus cavities and reduce any irritations or inflammation from building up

Bedtime Routine Tips

Try some of these tips to help reduce nighttime congestion right before you go to bed. You can also incorporate some of these tips throughout your normal daytime routine as well:

Drink Clear Liquids

Drink clear fluids throughout your day. Try to avoid those beverages that have high alcohol, sugar or caffeine levels. Clear liquids (especially water) help keep your mucus thin and able to drain from your nose.

Facial Steam or Hot Shower

Hot water vapor can also thin out mucus and provide relief from nasal congestion at night. The quickest way to make your own hot water steam is to run hot water in your bathroom or kitchen sink. Trap the vapor by putting a towel over your head and lean over the sink to inhale deeply.

Hot showers also provide relief from nasal congestion. You can thin out your mucus when you turn your shower on to a hot, but bearable temperature. Be sure to close your bathroom door to trap the steam inside the bathroom.

Use Corticosteroid Nasal Spray

Corticosteroids also help reduce irritation and inflammation. These nasal sprays (sometimes called an intransal corticosteroid spray) can be used to treat irritation-related congestion, sneezing or stuffy nose at night.

Next Steps

Are you ready to put a stop to nasal congestion at night once and for all? The good news is you can start today. Something as simple as changing your bed sheets and propping up your bed pillows can make the difference between a sleepless night and a restful one.

Talk to your physician about intransal corticosteroid sprays and whether they are the best treatment for you. Look into installing an air filter system in your home soon. They're an affordable way to extract allergens from your home environment.

For more **tips on relieving allergy symptoms**, check us out our blog. We're your go-to online source for all news, advice, and entertainment for the world's most eclectic region.

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