



ALLERGIES

Garlic (*Allium sativum*) and **Onion** (*A. cepa*). These may be beneficial because of the high concentrations of compounds such as quercetin. These compounds retard inflammatory reactions. Try to include these in your normal diet if you are prone to allergies.

Ginkgo (ginkgo biloba) The leaf extract of the stately ginkgo tree contains several unique substances (ginkgolides) that interfere with the action of a chemical that the body produces called the platelet-activating factor, or PAF. PAF plays a key role in triggering allergies, asthma and inflammation.

Nettle (stinging nettle) (*Urtica dioica*). Some good research shows that nettle preparations may effectively treat nasal allergy symptoms. For centuries, cultures around the world have used this herb to treat nasal and respiratory troubles: coughs, runny nose, chest congestion, asthma, whooping cough and even tuberculosis.

Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*). Aromatherapists recommend massaging with chamomile preparations to treat skin allergies such as hives and itching. There are compounds in chamomile that have significant anti-inflammatory and anti-allergic properties.

If you have hay fever, you should use chamomile oil and herbal products cautiously. Chamomile is a member of the ragweed family, and in some people, it might trigger allergic reactions. (Documented cases are extremely rare.) The first time you use chamomile, watch your reaction, and be sure to test a small area of skin for reaction. If it seems to help, go ahead and use it. But if it seems to make the itching worse, simply discontinue use.

Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*) Feverfew is best known these days for its proven effectiveness in treating migraine headaches. But this herb may also help relieve allergies.

Pregnant women should not take feverfew because of a remote possibility that it might trigger miscarriage. And women who are nursing should not use it because of the possibility of passing the herb to infants via milk.