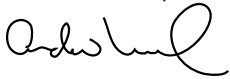


Warmer weather is here, an indication that spring has sprung. Now is a good time to take stock of your health as it relates to this season. This issue of *Balanced Living* looks at natural ways to tackle both seasonal allergies and house cleaning, simple tips to having a sunnier outlook on life, and provides information on the health benefits of spinach, vitamin D and more. Enjoy!

Yours in health,



Andrew Weil, M.D.



Spring Cleaning Your House Naturally

The transition into a new season is a great time for spring-cleaning. An uncluttered, clean home can not only instill a sense of calm and order, but also promote productivity and organization. This year, why not use environmentally friendly cleaning products in your cleaning routine? Natural cleaning products can be less harmful to humans, pets, and the environment, while still getting the job done.

If you are feeling creative, want to save money, or don't have access to commercial natural cleaning products, try some of these non-toxic cleaning suggestions using common household items – including a natural solution for your garden!

continued on p.2

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Natural Seasonal Allergy Help

If sneezing and itchy eyes are affecting your day-to-day routine, you may have seasonal allergies. Luckily you don't need to rely on over-the-counter allergy medications, which can have unpleasant side effects – natural ways to address allergies abound. The following approaches may have beneficial effects on your symptoms - give them a try:

continued on p.2



Contents

1 Spring Cleaning Your Home

1 Natural Seasonal Allergy Help

2 Monthly Wellness Challenge: Promoting Positivity

3 Vitamins A to Zinc: Vitamin D

3 Yoga Pose: Extended Side-Angle

4 Seasonal Food: Spinach

Monthly Wellness Challenge



Promoting Positivity

Positivity can lift your spirits and improve your emotional well-being. Each week this month, try one thing to promote positivity, such as a random act of kindness, mind-body therapy, [connecting with nature](#), or daily physical fitness. Notice how these simple and fun suggestions can lift your mood and try to make them a habit!

Spring Cleaning Your House Naturally

continued from p.1

- **White Vinegar:** Pour 2½ tablespoons of white vinegar in a quart spray bottle; fill the rest with water and, if you like, add a few drops of a pleasant-smelling oil extract such as orange or [lavender](#). A five percent vinegar solution kills 99 percent of bacteria, making this an affordable and effective way to clean countertops, stoves, windows, and refrigerator shelves.
- **Baking Soda:** This all-purpose cleaner is especially effective on glassware, can remove red-wine stains from carpeting, and - when made into a paste with water - can shine stainless steel and silver. You can also make a paste with a Castile- or vegetable-based liquid soap and a drop of essential oil (tea tree or lavender) to safely clean sinks, countertops, tubs, and toilets.
- **Grapefruit-Seed Extract:** Add to water in a spray bottle for an odorless way to kill mold and mildew.
- **Lemon Juice:** Use as a bleaching agent on clothing, and to remove grease from your stove and countertops. You can also add two tablespoons lemon juice to 10 drops of (real) lemon oil and a few drops of jojoba oil to clean and polish wood furniture.
- **Neem:** If you are planting an organic garden, neem is a great natural pest control that is non-toxic to animals and humans. It comes from the seeds and leaves of the Neem tree, *Azadirachta indica*, and acts as [insect repellents](#). Though neem products are somewhat more expensive than most synthetic pesticides, they are worth it for both personal and environmental health.

Natural Seasonal Allergy Help

continued from p.1

- Take freeze-dried [stinging nettles](#) and butterbur. Both herbs perform as well as antihistamines, without the drowsiness.
- Take [vitamin C](#) – it helps promote cellular and immune health.
- Eliminate dairy and any products that contain casein (to avoid immune-system irritation).
- Increase your intake of omega-3 fatty acids - they help combat inflammation caused by allergic reactions. Wild Alaskan salmon or high-quality fish oil supplements are good choices, with freshly ground flaxseeds as a weaker, but healthful addition.
- Eat foods rich in [quercetin](#). This bioflavonoid can help prevent the release of histamine. Citrus fruits, garlic, parsley, apples, broccoli and tea all contain quercetin.
- Eat plenty of antioxidant-rich fruits, such as berries and cherries, to help modify the body's inflammatory response.
- Try nasal douching with a warm saline solution by using a Neti pot.
- Drink plenty of water to keep nasal passages hydrated and to help flush out your system.
- Consider acupuncture. Respiratory conditions, including sinusitis and asthma, have been relieved with acupuncture.
- Avoid going out (or opening windows) before 10 am to avoid highest pollen counts.
- Follow an anti-inflammatory diet and avoid foods you are sensitive to.

The Pollen Defense Pack available through the [Weil Vitamin Advisor](#) contains some of the herbs and vitamins above.

