

The Early Sniffles

For most **allergy sufferers**, the winter means a break from their problems. Not everyone is so lucky. Hazel and **alder**, also associated with cross-allergies to nuts, apples and carrots, produce pollen as early as February.

The main problem at this time of year, is telling the difference between a cold and an allergy. One indicator is the **absence** of high temperature and aches and pains in the joints. Another good indicator for an allergy is **streaming eyes**. Although the easiest thing is to avoid **early flowering plants** by going on holiday, this is not always possible. The newer types of antihistamines are effective and have the **added advantage** of not causing **drowsiness**. Nasal **irrigation** and nasal sprays are good as both help to **alleviate** the **inflammation** of the nasal passages.

Pharmacy customer: Hello. I'm afraid that my German is not very good.

PTA: Hallo. No problem, I speak English! How may I help you?

I was out for a walk with my dog yesterday afternoon, and when I got home, my nose was running and my eyes were streaming.

Oh, that sound like **hay fever!**

Hay fever! Isn't it a bit early for pollen?

No, not really. Some plants, such as bushes and trees can start **releasing** pollen as early as the end of January or the beginning of February! Usually it's hazel and alder. As soon as the weather turns even slightly mild, they start to flower.

I wasn't really aware of that. I come originally from Canada, and our winters are much longer and much colder!

Certainly! To begin with I think you should start using this combination package of nasal spray and eye drops. The eye drops should be **shaken** well before use and should not be used for longer than six weeks after opening.

I'll make sure to think of that! Thank you.

At the beginning of the allergy season, it is also a good idea to take an antihistamine.

Don't they make you drowsy?
Not really, but these new tablets are really effective and don't make you drowsy at all.

Good, I'll take anything to get rid of this nuisance! Is there anything that you can recommend for my headache?

Unless your headache is really bad, I recommend not taking any **pain relievers** just yet. What I can recommend is salt and this nasal irrigator.

What does that do?

It's great for getting rid of the pollen and **mucous lodged** in the nasal passages. It has an advantage over normal cooking salt as it is in the correct dosage in these sachets and so it is isotonic.

Sounds interesting. How often should I use it?

To begin with mornings and evenings. Pour the contents into the irrigator. Then fill it up to with **lukewarm** water and shake it until it is **dissolved**. Then you angle your head forward and slightly to the side, place the **nozzle** to the open position and let it flow through one **nostril**. Then at the halfway mark, change sides.

Thank you, you have been very helpful.

Not at all! I know what it's like when you have hay fever.

Goodbye! And thanks again.
You are welcome! Goodbye! ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Sniffles | Schnupfen |
| alder | Erle |
| absence | Abwesenheit |
| streaming eyes | tränennde Augen |
| early flowering plants | Frühblüher |
| added advantage | zusätzliche Vorteil |
| drowsiness | Schläfrigkeit |
| nasal irrigation | Nasenspülung |
| alleviate | lindern |
| inflammation | Entzündung |
| hay fever | Heuschnupfen |
| releasing | setzen frei |
| shaken | geschüttelt |
| nuisance | Plage |
| pain relievers | Schmerzmittel |
| mucous | Schleim |
| lodged | gesteckt |
| lukewarm | lauwarm |
| dissolved | gelöst, aufgelöst |
| nozzle | Düse |
| nostril | Nasenloch |