

Histamine cause of itchy snozz

Summer brings irritating allergies

By LAURA SHEMICK
Collegian Staff Writer

This is the time of year when most people head outside to get a tan.

For millions of hay fever victims, it's time to head to the drugstore to buy allergy medicines to get rid of that stuffy, sneezing feeling creeping up on them.

Allergies, which occur when a person's body overreacts to normally harmless substances, affect at least 20 million Americans, according to the Allergy Foundation of America. About 13 million people suffer from hay fever, caused by pollen from all sorts of plants.

The symptoms are very similar to cold symptoms. There are sneezing spells, itchy eyes, a runny nose and there can be an upset stomach, irritability and headaches too. There is one basic chemical which causes all the misery — histamine.

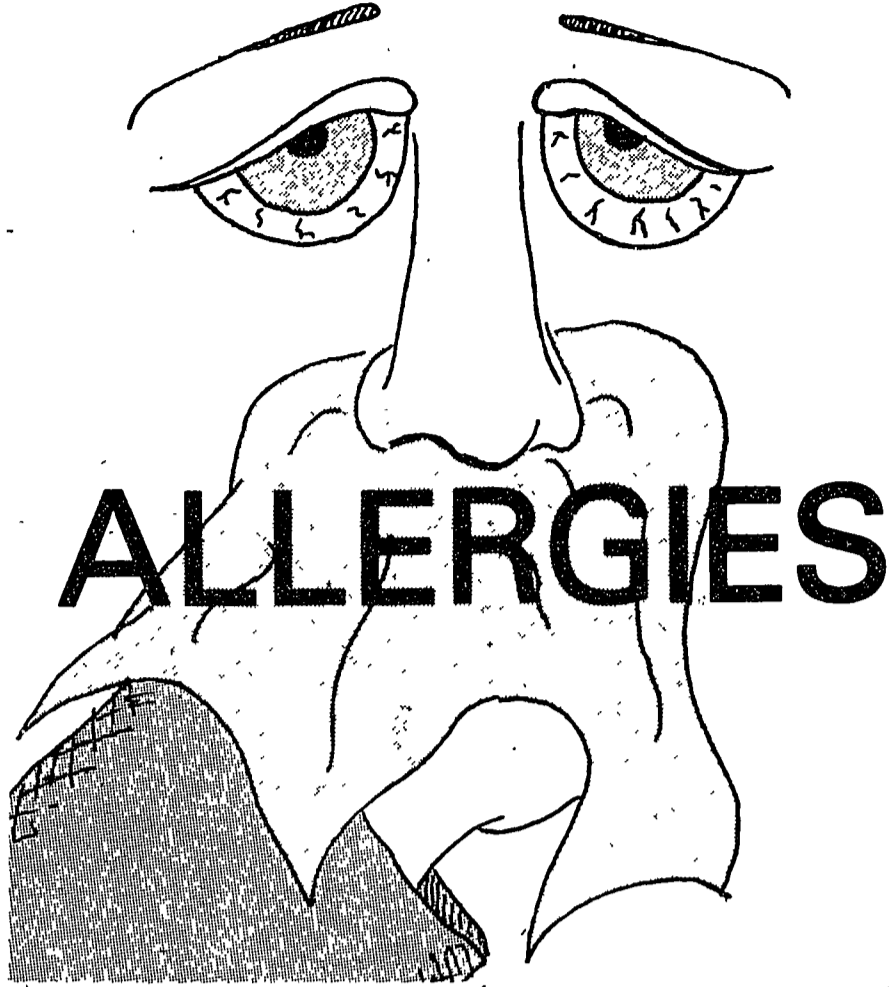
Histamine is formed when the affected person creates antibodies against the irritating substance, the allergen. It causes swelling (hives) and the other irritations connected with allergic reactions.

But sufferers need not live with their symptoms today. Allergists (specialists in allergy treatment) can do several things to help the victim when a particular allergen comes along.

He can treat the symptoms with antihistamines, which counter the effects of the irritating histamine.

He can tell the victim to avoid the allergen — stay away from horses, if that's the problem.

Or he can systematically immunize



the victim against that particular irritant through shots, a method called desensitization or hyposensitization.

But the first step is to isolate the allergen. Allergists can do this by eliminating various foods from a per-

son's diet, or by doing a scratch test, or by using a new, experimental method called RAST.

RAST uses the blood of an affected person to determine which antibodies he has. The test can discover any allergy, according to State College dermatologist Dr. Charles H. Wingert, Jr.

The scratch test, familiar to many allergy sufferers, tests for reactions to common allergens by scratching the skin and putting a bit of the suspect substance on the scratch. If the skin becomes inflamed or a swelling occurs, it means the person is allergic to the suspected allergen.

Dr. Wingert favors hyposensitization. "Hyposensitization is the best way to treat allergies," he said. "A good thing about the RAST test is that it can be used to measure the new levels of antibodies after a course of hyposensitization to see how the patient is doing."

The most common allergies in this locale are to ragweed pollen, tree pollen and grass pollen, Wingert said.

The list of allergens is seemingly endless. People can be allergic to all sorts of food, plants, various animals, many drugs and any of the thousands of common pollens.

The Allergy Foundation of America said in its book "Allergy — Its Mysterious Causes and Modern Treatment" that hay fever, if left untreated, can develop into asthma, a disease which makes breathing difficult and even painful.

The Foundation stresses that it is important for all allergy sufferers to obtain and continue treatment to prevent possible troubles in later years.

Minority art journal released nationally

The first issue of *Minority Voices*, a journal studying the art and literature of minorities, has been released nationally this week by the Paul Robeson Cultural Center.

The journal, which is geared toward academic circles, includes articles examining the art and literature of Afro-Americans, Chicanos, Native Americans, and Puerto Ricans.

The semi-annual publication plans to focus on ten major areas — literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, photography, music, dance, theater, cinema and television.

According to editor Elaine D. Woodall, "Minority Voices" evolved because "there was a tremendous need for a journal that would address itself to literature and art in these four minority groups."

Woodall, a graduate student of art

history, said there were not enough avenues for scholars to publish what they were working on in the field of minority studies.

Although the journal concentrates exclusively on scholarly articles and reviews, Ms. Woodall noted that the publication should also be a valuable resource for students. (However, at this writing, copies were not available from Pattee Library.)

Scholars from several universities serve on the magazine's editorial board including seven from Penn State.

Thomas A. Hale, assistant professor of French and comparative literature, is a featured contributor this issue, while Daniel Walden, professor of American studies, is the book review editor. The magazine's managing editor is Elmore M. Browne, director of the Paul Robeson Cultural Center.

Collegian notes

The Women's Resource Center needs people to write press releases, design flyers, write pamphlets and do general publicity work a few hours each week. Contact the center at 108 W. Beaver Ave., or 234-5222.

WDFM radio is looking for people to work at the station on the air. Interested students should attend a meeting 7:30 tonight in 121 Sparks.

Centre Crest orientation will be held 7 tonight in 323 HUB.

Anyone interested in quitting smoking is invited to a meeting 7:30 tonight in 121 Noll Lab, sponsored by the Human Performance Lab.

Meet foreign students and help them speak English through the Free U Conversant Program. An introductory meeting will be held 7:30 p.m. Tuesday.

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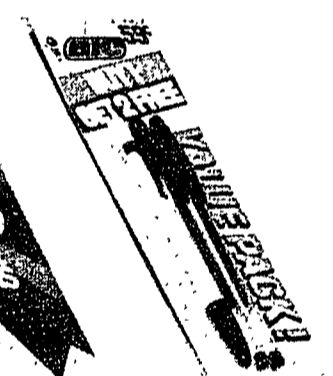
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