

Cat Allergy Alleviated with Reishi

by Howell Lewis

My 54 year-old brother David developed a very severe allergy to cats over several decades that began in his 20s when, for some unknown reason, his eyes became so prickly he had to wash them repeatedly to gain relief. The cause was identified as the reaction became more severe and more immediate with tell-tale signs of a dry and furry throat within seconds of exposure to cat allergens whether the cat was present or not. David's allergy intensified with age until, by his mid 30s, it was so bad that even if a cat had walked through a room hours before he would suffer a very fierce reaction within minutes: a torrent of mucus flooding from his nose, red, itchy and swollen eyes to the point of not being able to see and a painful, pounding headache! David was not keen to take drugs continuously because he could go for weeks or months without coming across a cat and consequent allergic incident.

Remedy

I provided David with Reishi extract to help with his allergy and for its overall health benefits. Reishi has been proven to significantly alleviate all four types of allergic reactions by working in three ways:

- It inhibits the release of histamine from mast cells;
- It is anti-inflammatory;
- It balances the immune system.

This combined effect did not just alleviate my brother's allergy but stopped it completely! David had been taking it for two months and did not realize his allergy was no longer a problem until November 2003, while on holiday in Thailand when we went into a cafe to have a drink. No cats were visible; however, once we sat down cats swarmed around us and even walked on the table. It was too late to get out and, judging by the look of horror on his face, David expected to suffer a reaction anyway. But he did **not**. In fact he did not have even the slightest hint of an allergic response! We enjoyed the cold beer and thought no

more of it, so much so it was not until a few weeks later, while recalling holiday memories and that particular (and peculiar) place, that it dawned on him. David continues to take Reishi and can now stroke cats without suffering an allergic reaction. We returned there the following year and learnt the owner had 27 cats.

David may well have been in situations that would have caused an allergic reaction before this incident without being aware that his immune response had changed. Herbal remedies are not as fast acting as pharmacy drugs and the change is often gradual. Case studies of hay fever sufferers indicate a larger dose might be necessary at first. It seems the body needs a little more help to begin with but once the allergy is under control it can be kept suppressed with a daily maintenance dose.

Reishi is the top-rated and most important herb in the Orient and the most thoroughly researched, with over 200 active ingredients and unique compounds that are the most biologically active obtainable from any plant source. Oleic acid and cyclooctasulfur are the main active ingredients that inhibit histamine release from mast cells. Reishi is well-known for its potent immune boosting effects where its active ingredients stimulate macrophages, NK and T cells, resulting in a heightened response to foreign cells, whether bacteria, virus or tumour cells. Unlike other immune boosting herbs it has the extraordinary capacity to regulate and balance the immune system in autoimmune conditions, where it is overactive and has over compensated, and is an approved treatment in Japan for *Myasthenia gravis*, a severely debilitating autoimmune disease.

Reishi boosts immunoglobulin levels with increases in IgA, IgG and IgM observed after for months. In clinical trials of 2,000 cases of allergy related chronic bronchitis it provided success rates of over 60% and 97% overall improvement. There

was a notable rise of immunoglobulin A in sputum. Immunoglobulin A is the main immunoglobulin found in the respiratory tract and a deficiency is common in allergies, systemic lupus and rheumatoid arthritis.

Reishi's anti-inflammatory benefits are thought to be partly due to its powerful antioxidant action. The immune system and antioxidant activity becomes weaker with ageing. Antioxidant supplementation has shown a remarkable ability to forestall age related changes to the immune system and even reverse many aspects of immune function in people with impaired immune capabilities.

Reishi is an adaptogen herb that works with the body. It can also work with steroid creams used for treating dermatitis and allow for a lowered dose with the same effect. It is not toxic and can be taken over prolonged periods without side-effects. Some researchers think there is a chance of cross-sensitivity in individuals who are allergic to button mushrooms while others do not consider it so. In fact, Reishi has been used in China as an antidote to mushroom poisoning.

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About the Author

Howell Lewis is currently a nurse with a long-term interest in complementary healthcare. He came across Reishi while studying herbal medicine and was so impressed he started a business to import it from China. During a horticulture degree in the mid 70s he advocated organic growing, deemed somewhat eccentric by his tutors, and opened a whole food restaurant in 1980 to the disgust of some potential customers. Howell learnt Reflexology in 1984, and gained an MA in 1995 with a research dissertation on left and right brain functioning. He may be contacted via info@lifeforce-herbs.co.uk