

MEDICINE

Only One-Fourth of Hay Fever Patients May Expect Cure

TINY GRAINS of pollen from early-blossoming trees are sending the first of the season's hay fever sufferers to their physicians for treatment. One-fourth of them can look forward to complete relief by the desensitization treatment, while a varying number more will be definitely benefited.

The first step in hay fever treatment is to determine what plant or tree pollen or animal or food protein causes the trouble in the individual case. Some persons are sensitive to more than one such irritant. When the offending pollen and other proteins are discovered, they are injected in tiny but gradually increasing amounts until finally the system has become desensitized to them and can tolerate the amounts usually present in the air.

An English scientist, John Freeman, director of the department of clinical bacteriology at St. Mary's Hospital, London, devised a new and speedy method of treating these unfortunates which he called, appropriately, "rush" desensitization. The method is essentially the same as other methods of hay fever treatment except for its speed. Instead of giving the patient a treatment once a week for several weeks, Mr. Freeman gives them one every one and one-half or two hours throughout a 14-day period. The patient either goes into a hospital or has a trained nurse at home who can give the treatments and watch his condition carefully.

Sanatorium Treatment

Another method recently found helpful in treating patients with hay fever, asthma and similar conditions is the sanatorium treatment. Dr. Zella White Stewart of Iowa City, Iowa, reported to the Association for the Study of Allergy that when patients are removed to a sanatorium, diagnosis is easier, treatment more sure, and education of the patient more successful.

In a sanatorium, for instance, it is possible to remove many of the common causes of sensitiveness and thus enable the remainder to be identified more easily. All wool, hair and feathers are avoided, for example. Precautions against the intrusion of pollen may be taken in season according to the

location of the sanatorium. Thus all common causes except foods are eliminated and the importance of these can be readily decided by a study of the patient in these ideal surroundings.

Some persons get hay fever from protein in foods, animal hair or feathers, glue, horn-rimmed glasses, molds, dust, and many other queer sources besides plant and tree pollens.

Tree pollens are responsible for about six per cent. of hay fever sufferers, Dr. Harry S. Bernton, professor of hygiene and preventive medicine at Georgetown University Medical School, Washington, found. Of this six per cent., over half owe their hay fever to varieties of oak trees, with hickory and sycamore following closely. These observations were made in the District of Columbia but are representative of the situation in the eastern part of the United States as well, Dr. Bernton said.

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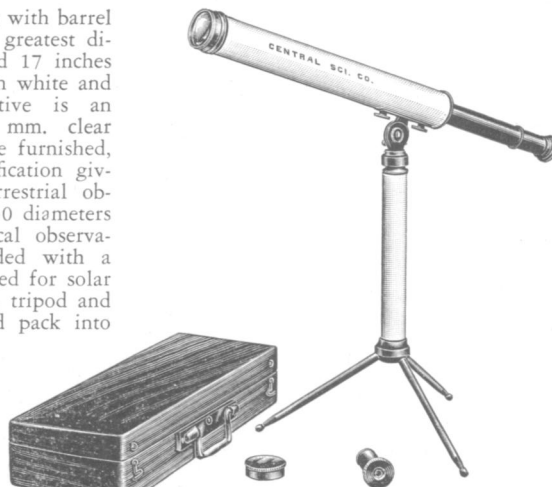
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