



with Caitlin Chang

health

EASE THE SNEEZE!

Spring heralds warmer temperatures and beautiful blooms, but it's also pollen season, which means bad news for hayfever sufferers. Along with celebs including Scarlett Johansson and Hugh Grant, about 3 million Australians experience hayfever, making it one of the most common chronic respiratory conditions in the country.

1 What is it? Known as allergic rhinitis, it's usually a reaction to pollen from trees, grasses and weeds. It can stimulate a release of histamine, causing inflammation of your nasal passages, sneezing, an itchy throat, runny nose and watery eyes.

2 Pollen problem Pollen counts are on the rise and can stay high for months. Trees pollinate in late winter, followed by flowers and then weeds. Reduce your exposure by wearing sunglasses, avoid the outdoors on windy days or remove particular weeds and plants from your garden.

3 Manage your sneeze Speak to your GP about antihistamines. Or treat symptoms with natural antihistamines including kiwifruit, pineapple, turmeric, licorice tea, ginger, horseradish and garlic.

"I'm allergic to the outdoors," says Scarlett Johansson. "I have lots of seasonal allergies."

Eat pumpkin, breathe easy

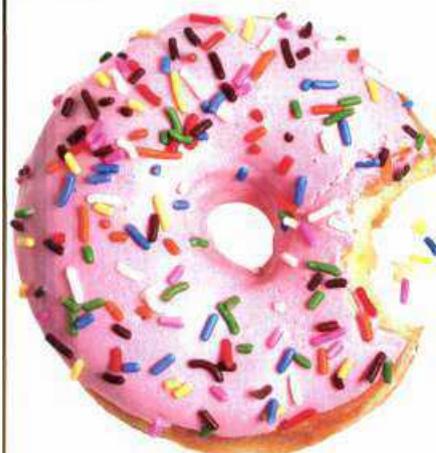
As a great source of vitamin C, fibre and particularly betacarotene, pumpkins are superb for healthy digestion, better vision and a strong immune system. Carotenoids such as betacarotene, which our bodies turn into usable vitamin A, have been shown to be highly protective of the lungs, especially in smokers and those exposed to secondhand smoke.

An edited extract from *50 Foods That Will Change Your Life* by Emma Sutherland and Michelle Thrift (Viking, RRP\$35).

Kelly Osbourne gave up alcohol after several rehab stints.

40%

That's the percentage of Australians who say they drink to get drunk, according to *The Foundation of Alcohol Research and Education* poll.



STOP YOUR SWEET TOOTH

Your soft spot for lollies could be doing serious damage to your insides. Research published in the *European Journal of Cancer Prevention* found that biscuits, lollies and other sugary foods can increase the risk of developing bowel cancer.



With many studies warning of the dangers of sitting all day, regular yoga practise can undo a lot of muscular damage for desk jockeys. Try Downward Facing Dog. Move into an inverted V shape. With hands outstretched in front of you, lift your hips and push your feet into the floor. Press fingers into the floor and point them forward. Hold for 30-60 seconds.