

Baker's Yeast Beta-Glucan Supplement Reduces Allergy Symptoms and Improves Quality of Life in Ragweed Sufferers

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Ragweed is a leading cause of seasonal allergy symptoms and affects 36 million Americans. Typical symptoms include nasal congestion, sneezing, itchy eyes, and difficulty breathing caused by an immune system overreaction to ragweed pollen. Several studies show Baker's yeast beta-1,3/1,6 D-glucan (BG), extracted from *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* is effective in reducing the incidence of cold/flu symptoms. This study evaluated the effect of a BG supplement (Wellmune) on allergy symptoms, ragweed-specific IgE, and quality of life (QOL) indices in self-described ragweed sufferers. Forty-eight healthy subjects consumed a placebo (P, N=24) or 250mg of Wellmune (W, N=24) daily for 4-weeks during Sept/Oct (high local pollen count). Allergy surveys, including the validated Rhinoconjunctivitis Quality of Life Questionnaire (RQLQ), were used to assess differences in allergy symptoms. There were no differences between groups on IgE markers. Subjects in the Wellmune group reported fewer allergy symptoms (W = 4.2 v. P = 5.8) and reduced severity of allergy symptoms (W = 6.9 v. P = 14.3) compared to placebo ($p < 0.05$). Subjects in the Wellmune group reported significant reductions in nasal (W = 0.7 v. P = 1.6) and eye symptoms (W = 0.6 v. P = 0.8) with a 56% improved QOL Index. These data show that daily supplementation with Wellmune reduces allergy symptoms and improves quality of life in individuals that suffer from ragweed allergy.

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