

## real life

### "I beat my allergies with acupuncture!"

**F**or two weeks Allison Watters lethargically trudged around her office with painful sinus pressure that was unlike anything she'd experienced before. *I need to nip whatever this is in the bud before it gets worse*, she thought, worried that she'd be forced to miss work. But when Allison visited her doctor, he said she wasn't sick—she was just suffering from her most severe allergies to date!

Summer allergies weren't unusual for Allison—sensitivity to grass had nagged her for years. And while over-the-counter remedies brought temporary relief, this latest flare-up pushed her to find a long-term solution. Her



Allison Watters, 26, New York City

doctor's suggestion: acupuncture. "I was skeptical," says Allison. "But then realized I had nothing to lose." So she scheduled an appointment later that day.

After taking down Allison's medical history, the acupuncturist placed fine needles in her feet, elbows and hands. Within seconds, Allison felt a calming, warm flush. The result of that single treatment: Allison's congestion faded. "I couldn't believe how much better I felt!" she raves. "And I haven't had an allergy symptom in weeks!"

### How acupuncture eases summer sniffles

Stimulating acupressure points can eliminate allergy symptoms in just four to eight weeks, according to studies in the journal *Pediatrics* and elsewhere. In one study, scientists determined that participants' levels of allergy-causing proteins called *cytokines* decreased after treatment. More research is under way to determine how acupuncture delivers this immune-regulating action.

Sidebar text: Faye Rausch. Science-box text: Lorraine Sullivan.