

ALLERGIES



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OVERVIEW

Weather

Seasons

What you can do

Treatments

Weird things that may make your allergies worse



WHAT IS AN ALLERGY?

An allergy is a hypersensitivity immune response to normally harmless substances, such as pollens or foods.

For most people, these substances—also called allergens—pose no problem.

In allergic individuals, however, the immune system identifies them as a threat and produces an inappropriate (i.e., abnormal) response.

Hundreds of ordinary substances may trigger an allergic reaction.

What is your allergy?

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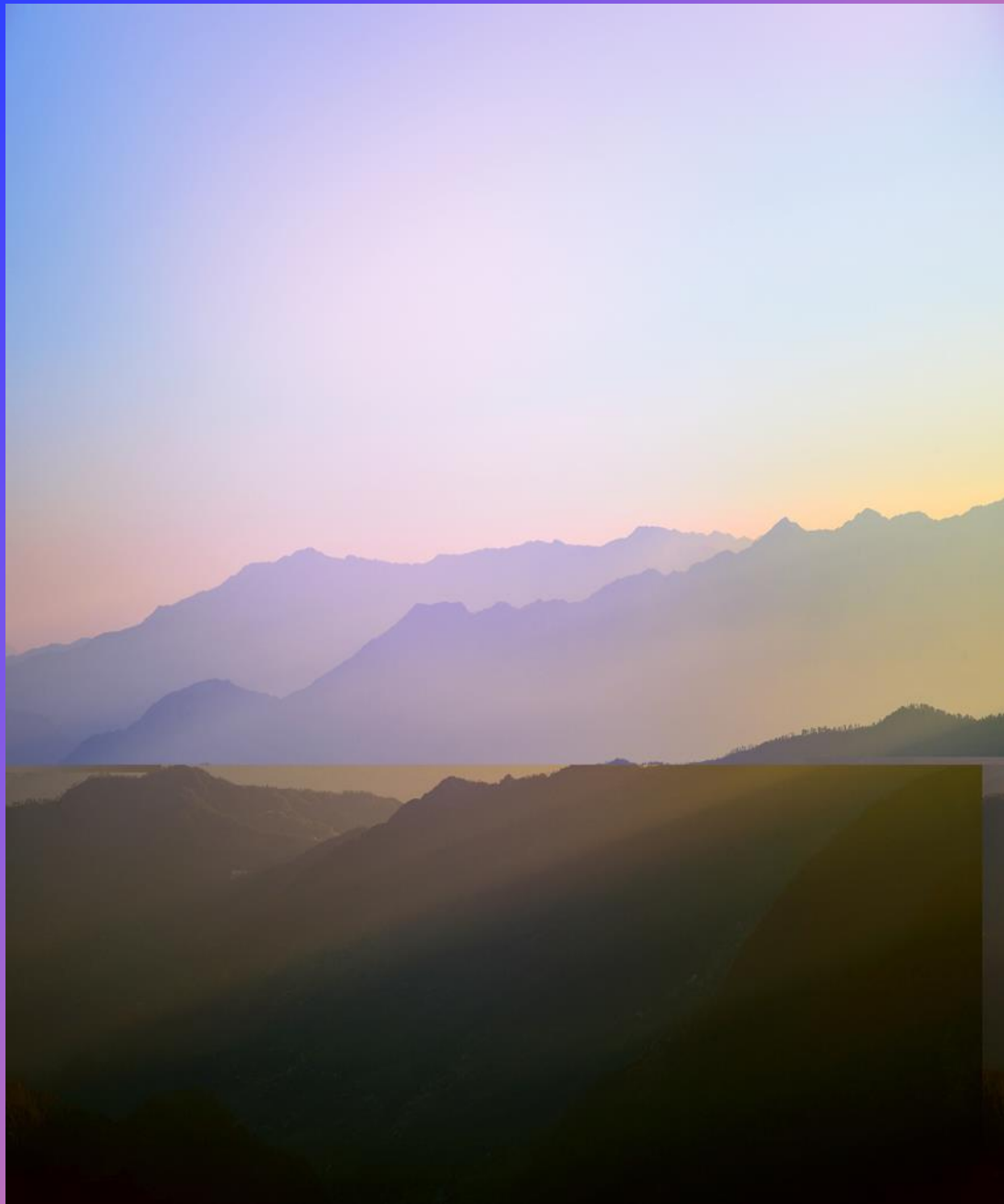
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WHAT IS AN ALLERGY?

- When someone is exposed to an allergen and he or she becomes sensitized, the body then produces antibodies called Immunoglobulin E (IgE).
- The next time the person encounters the same allergen, the allergen binds to the IgE antibodies and causes the mast cell to release histamine and other chemicals.
- This reaction causes inflammation and triggers allergy symptoms that can range from mild to severe, affecting the skin, gastrointestinal tract, cardiovascular system, and/or respiratory tract.

WEATHER





Dry, windy days

Wind blows pollen into the air, causing hay fever.

Rainy or humid days

Moisture makes mold grow, both indoors and out. Dust mites also thrive in humid air. But if you're allergic to pollen, humid or damp days are good. The moisture weighs down the pollen, keeping it on the ground.

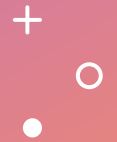
Cold air

Many people with [allergic asthma](#) find that cold air is a problem, especially when they exercise outside. It can trigger a coughing fit

Heat

Air pollution is worst on hot summer days. Ozone and smog can be a serious trigger for people with allergic asthma

SEASONS



Changing season can set off nasal issues:

sinus pressure

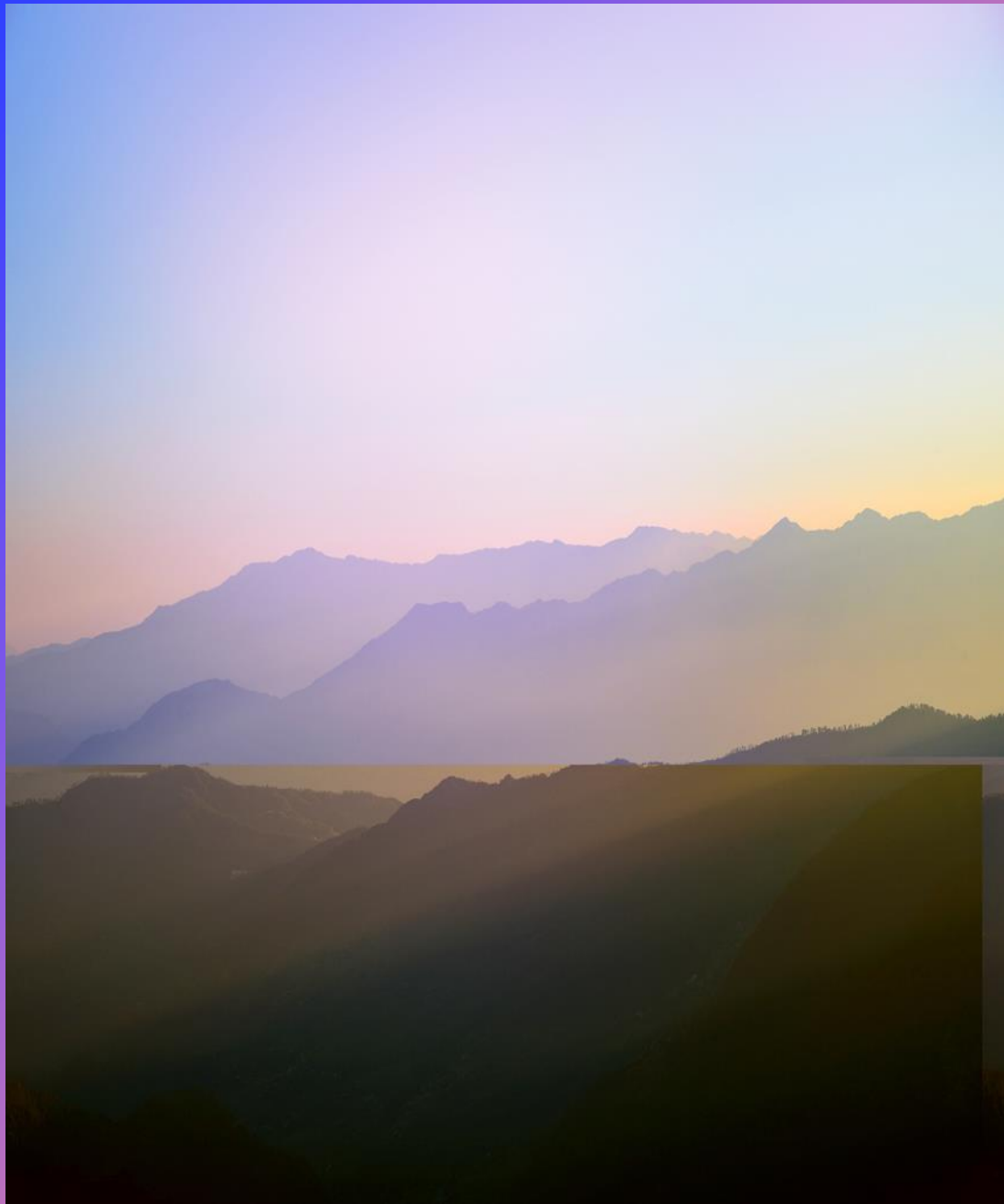
congestion

runny nose

a general crummy feeling

changes in barometric pressure and rain can exacerbate symptoms





Spring

In cooler states, plants start to release pollens in February or March. Tree pollens are also a common cause of a [spring allergy](#)

Summer

Early in summer, grass pollen can trigger reactions. Later in the summer, ragweed and other weeds can become a problem. Mold can hit its peak in July in the warmer states

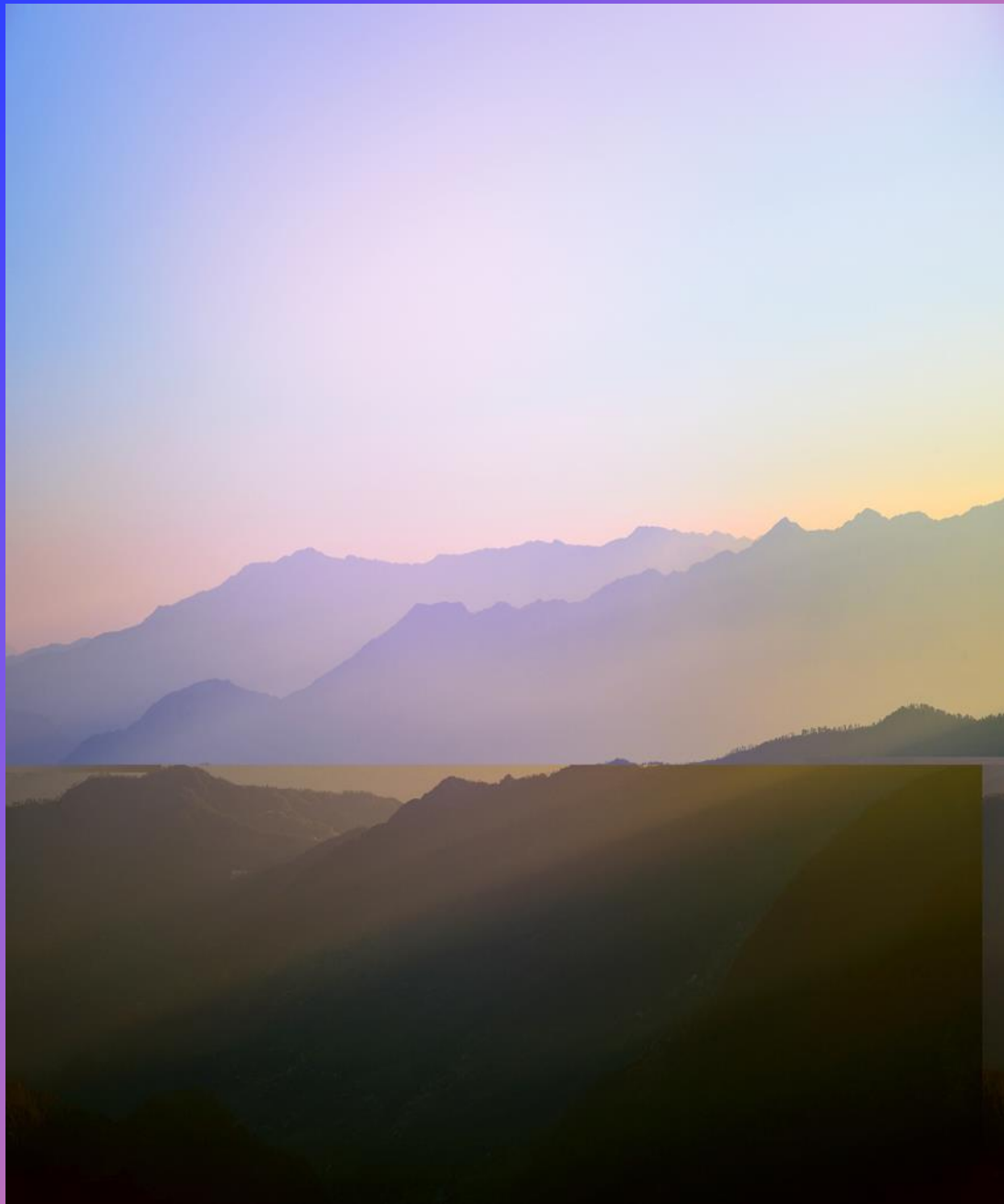
Fall

Ragweed season usually ends with the first frost in October. In colder states, mold tends to be worst in the fall

Winter

Indoor allergens -- like pet dander and dust mites -- can become more of a problem in winter.

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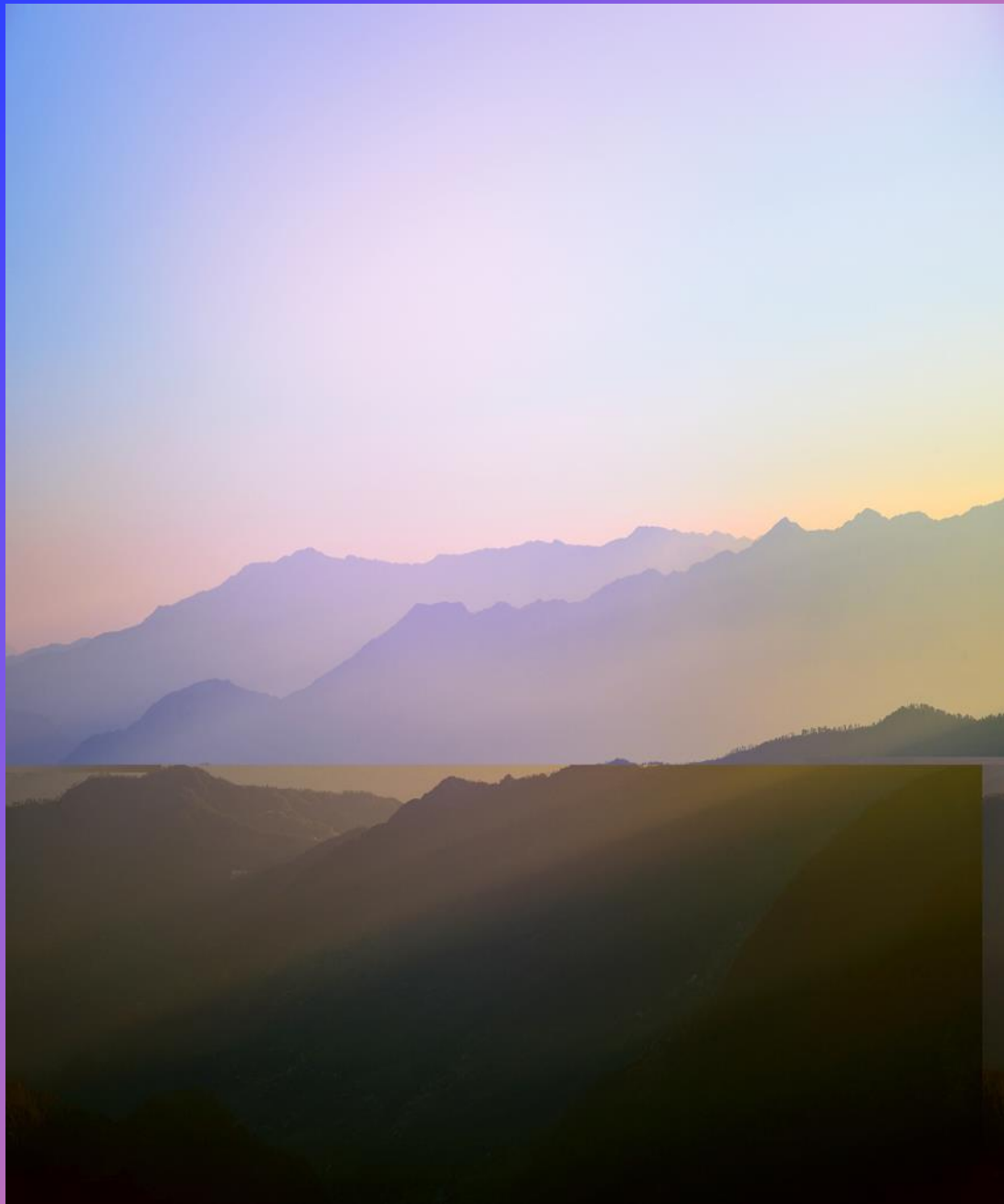


Pay attention to the weather

Check local pollen and mold counts. Watch for Ozone Action Days. Spend less time outside when you're likely to have problems.

Prepare for allergies.

If you have the same allergy at the same time every year -- ragweed in the fall or tree pollen in the spring -- get ahead of it. Ask your doctor if you can start taking allergy drugs about 2 weeks before you usually start sneezing, coughing, or itching. That way, you can stop them before they start.



Control your environment.

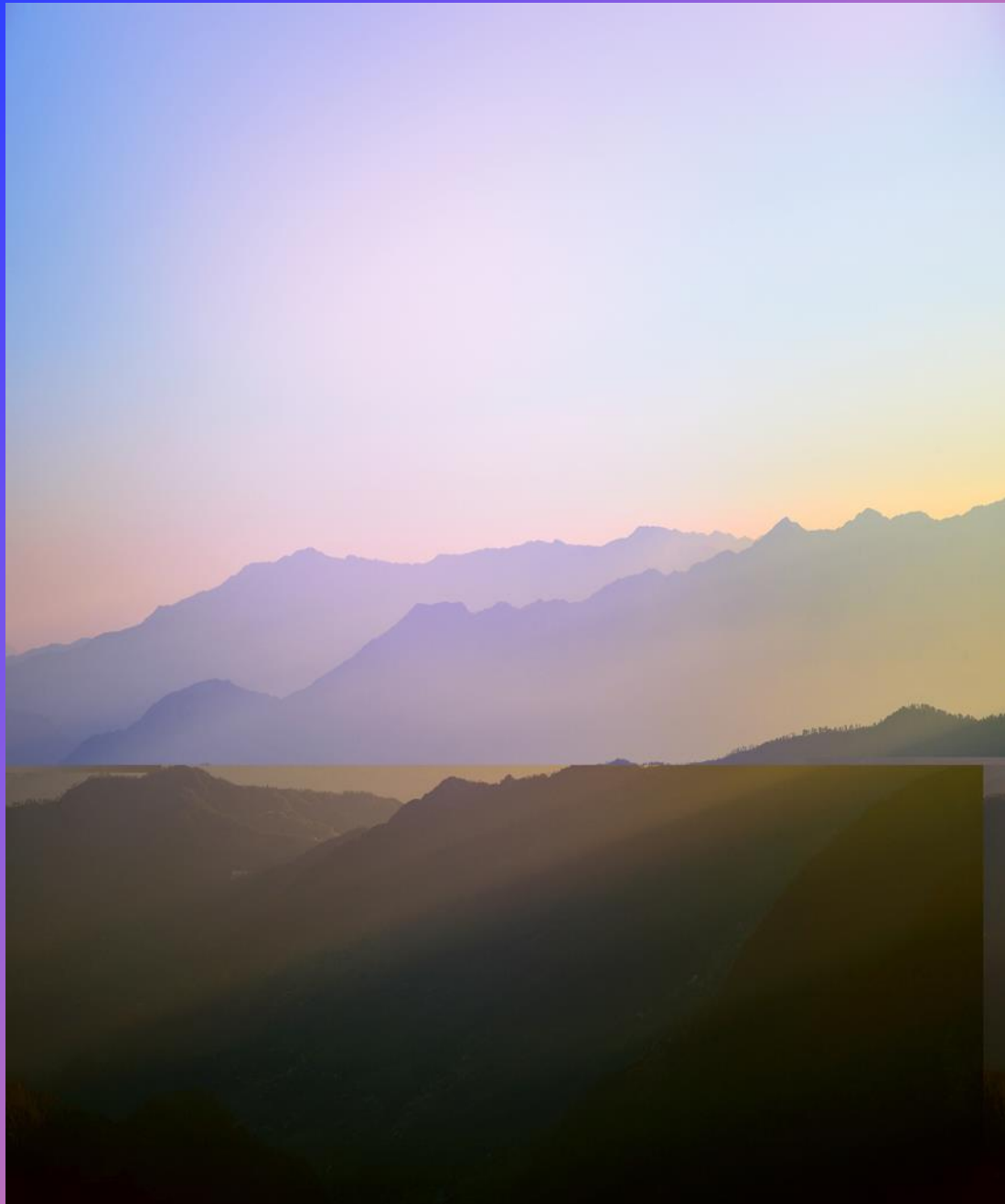
Use air conditioning to filter out mold and pollen. Use a dehumidifier to ward off mold growth and dust mites

Get the right diagnosis.

Don't just guess what's causing your allergies. See your doctor to have an allergy skin test, which can show you exactly what triggers your symptoms. When you get the results, you might consider asking about immunotherapy, such as [allergy shots](#) or tablets that go under your tongue. They can help keep your allergies under control no matter what the weather or the season.

TREATMENTS



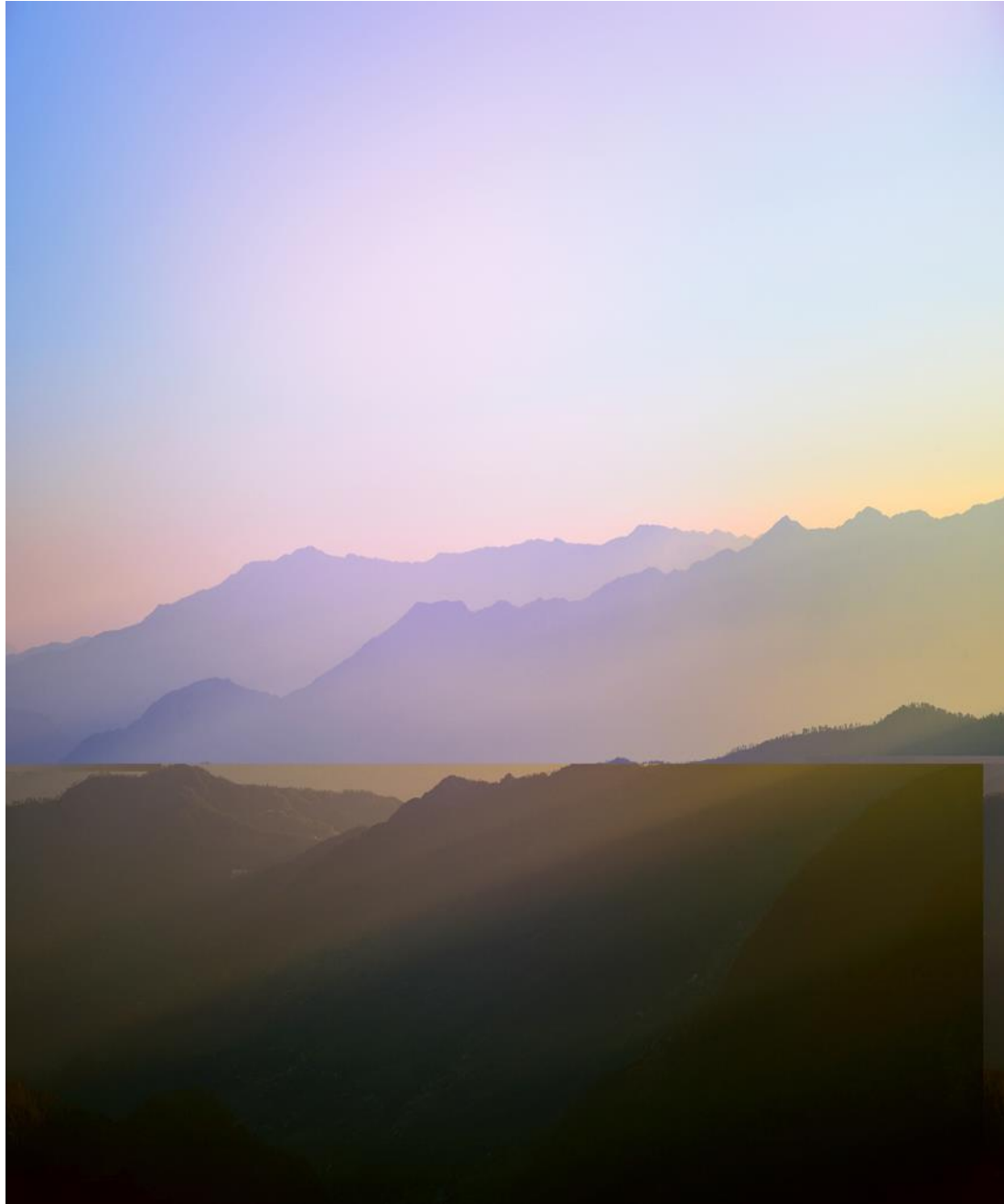


Nasal corticosteroids are nose sprays. They reduce swelling. Swelling causes a stuffy, runny and itchy nose. They are the most effective medicines for nasal allergies.

Antihistamines block histamine, a trigger of allergic swelling. They can calm sneezing, itching, runny nose and hives. They come in pills, liquids, melting tablets or nose sprays. These treat seasonal and indoor allergies.

Mast cell stabilizers keep your body from releasing histamine. This can help with itchy, watery eyes or an itchy, runny nose. They are available as eye drops or nose sprays.

Decongestants reduce stuffiness by shrinking swollen membranes in the nose. But be careful. Using these sprays more than three days in a row may cause the swelling and stuffiness in your nose to get worse. This can happen even after you **stop** using the medicine. This reaction is a rebound reaction.



Drug Names

Nasal cortico-steroids-Flonase, Nasocort, Rhinocort Nasonex

Antihistamines

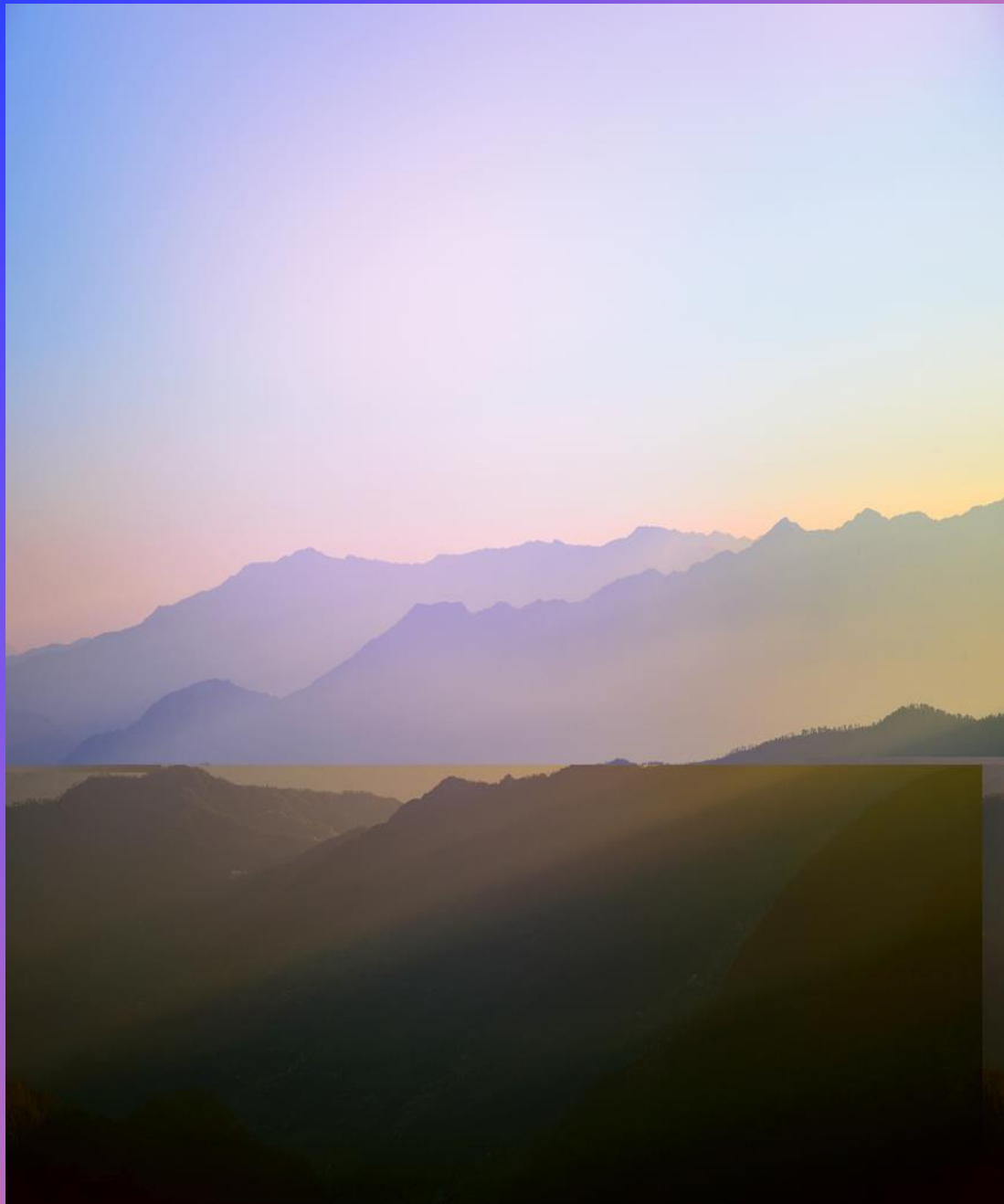
Pills: Clariton, Zyrtec, Allegra, Xyzall,

Nasal spray: Astelin-,Aasta

Mast cell stabilizaer nasal spray,
Cromalyn

Decongestant

Sudafed

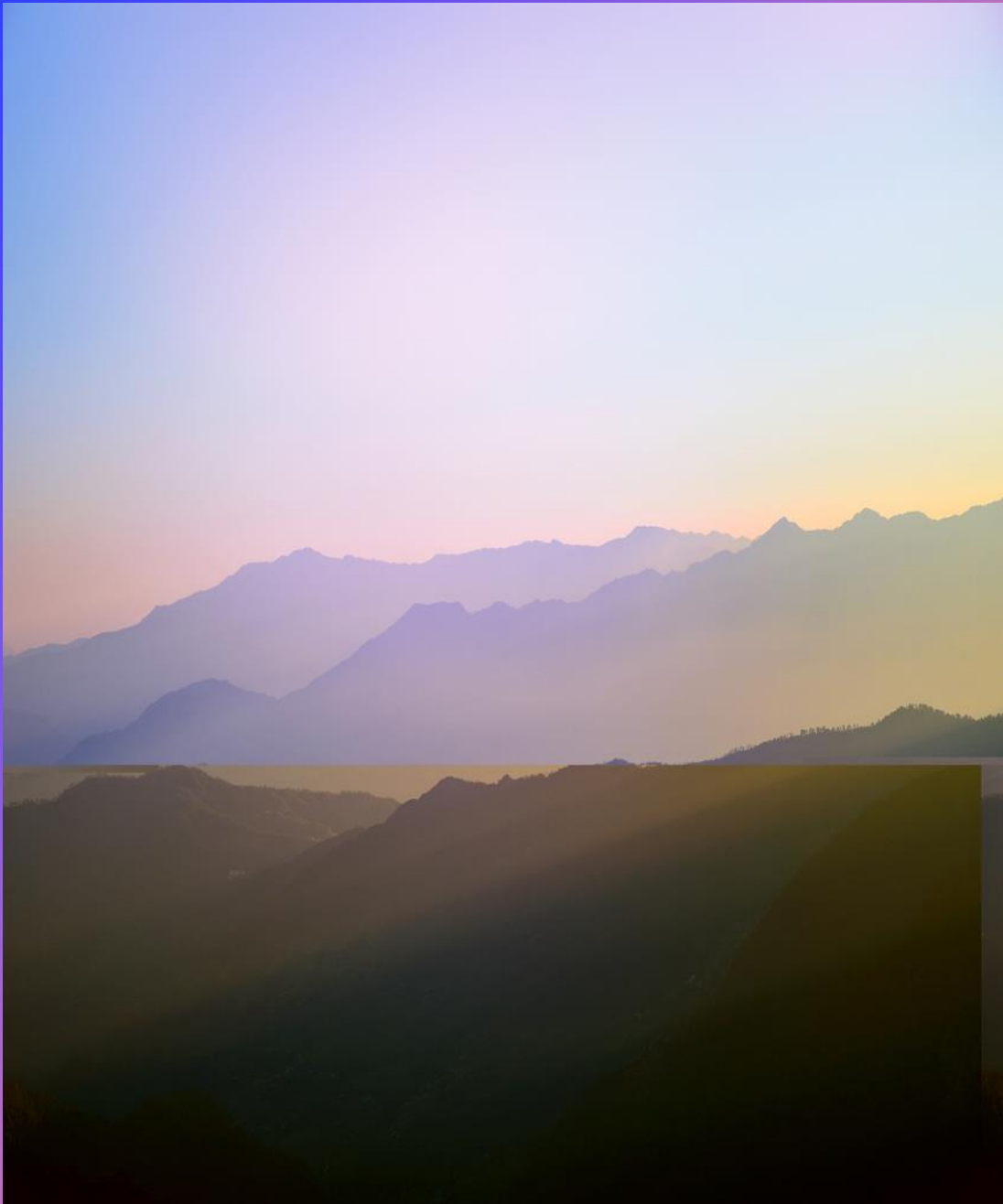


Corticosteroid creams or ointments relieve itchiness and stop the spread of rashes. See your doctor if your rash does not go away after using this cream for a week. Corticosteroids are *not* the same as anabolic steroids used illegally by some athletes to build muscles.

Oral corticosteroids may be prescribed to reduce swelling and stop severe allergic reactions. These medicines can cause serious side effects. Expect your doctor to carefully monitor you while taking it. Oral corticosteroids are *not* the same as anabolic steroids used illegally by some athletes to build muscles.

Epinephrine comes in a pre-measured and self-injectable device. It is the most important medicine to give during a life-threatening [anaphylaxis](#) (severe allergic reaction). To work, you must get an [epinephrine](#) shot within minutes of the first sign of serious allergic reaction. It treats life-threatening allergic reactions to [food](#), [stinging insects](#), [latex](#) and [drugs/medicines](#).

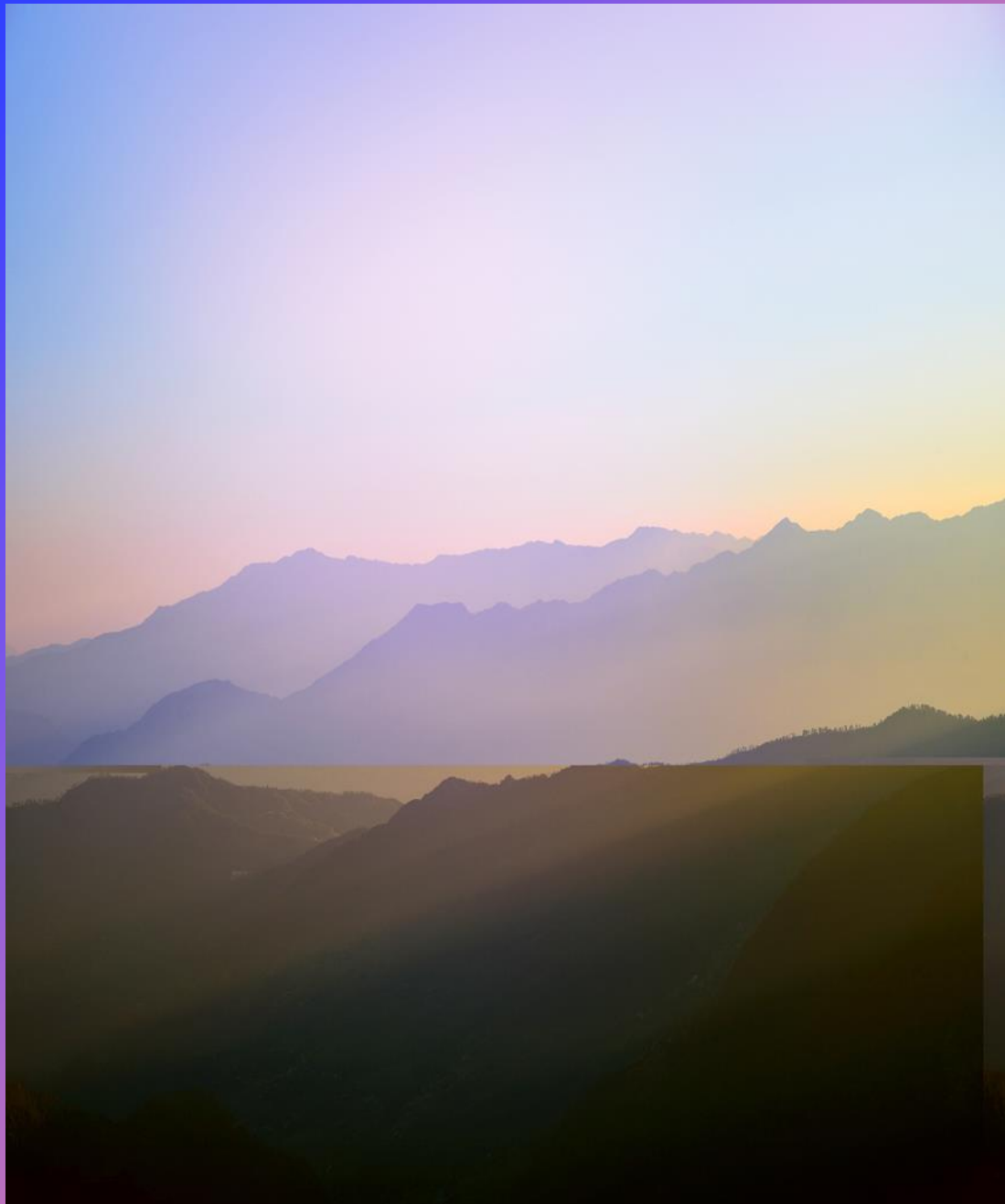
SOME WEIRD THINGS THAT MAY MAKE YOUR ALLERGIES WORSE



Making your bed?

Indoor allergens like dust mites thrive in bedding. They eat the skin you shed and enjoy the moisture from your body sweat/ moisture. By making your bed in the morning, you're tucking them into their dream home. Literally.

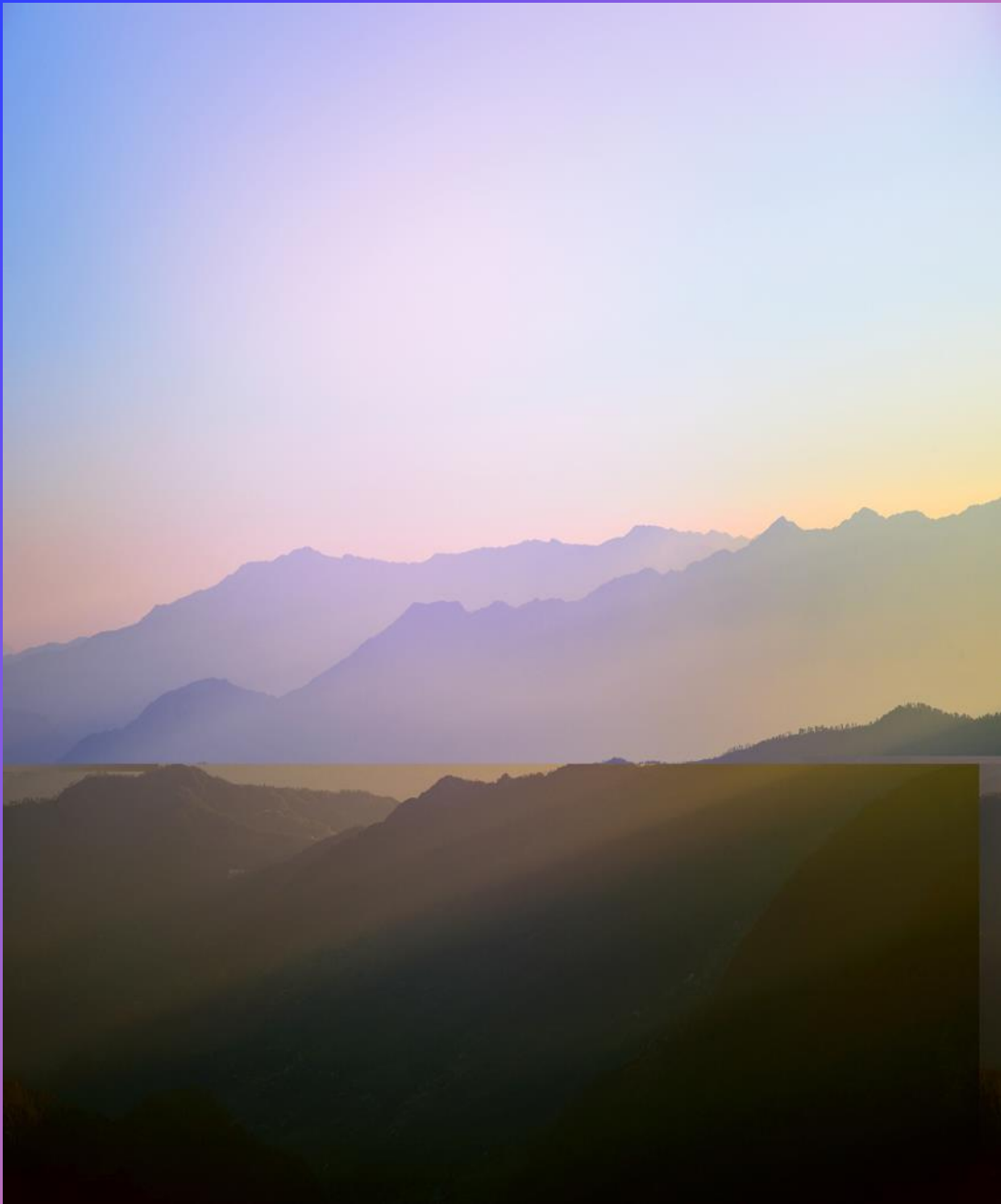
Airing out the sheets allowing natural sunlight to dry them out can naturally make it harder for these microorganisms and allergens to survive.



Am I allergic to alcohol?

Drinking alcohol can cause an irritation in some people related to sulfites, and other compounds in wine and beer.

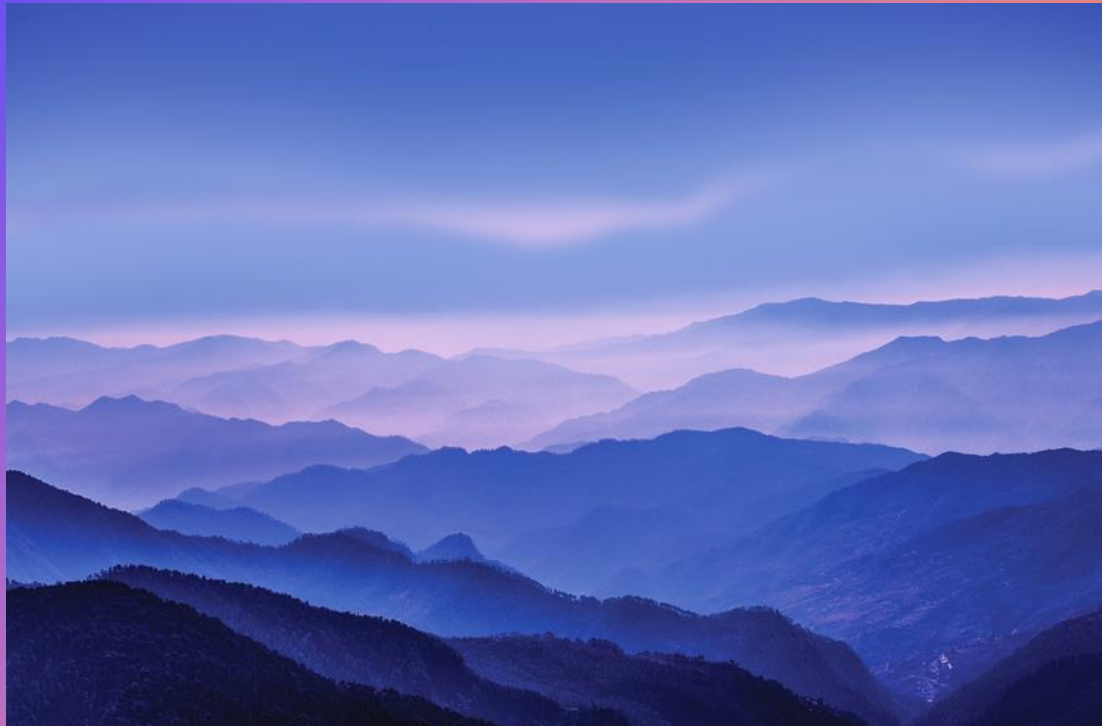
Your sinuses act up, nose starts to run; you have nasal stuffiness. This is a nonallergic mechanism that can bother anybody whether they have allergies or not. If you do have an allergy already, and you're exposed to things you're allergic to, let's say it is a bad ragweed day, you may have a more intense reaction by drinking alcohol.



Am I allergic to raking leaves?

This fall activity can come with a side of sniffles if you're sensitive to mold. Mold is going to settle in all kinds of places, but it [particularly] loves damp areas. If you have a pile of leaves and you start to rake them, you're going to move a lot of mold around.

Mold may also be to blame for allergy symptoms while you mow the lawn this fall. People think they're having a grass allergy when they cut the grass but more likely it's the pollen in the area, or an allergy to mold.



In summary

Don't suffer with allergies

Know your triggers/allergens

Minimize your exposure

Take optimal medicine to control your allergies

ALLERGIES

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THANK YOU

Questions? Comments?