

Hay fever

Hay fever is a common condition also known as seasonal allergic rhinitis and affects around 1 in 5 people in the UK. It often runs in families and is more likely to affect people who suffer from asthma or eczema.

It is an allergic condition where the body's immune system overreacts to substances that are usually harmless, for example pollen from grasses, flowers or trees. The pollen causes the release of a chemical called histamine from cells in the nose, eyes and airways, which cause inflammation.

What are the symptoms?

- ✓ Headaches and sinus pain
- ✓ Itchy, blocked or runny nose
- ✓ Red, itchy, puffy or watery eyes
- ✓ Itchy throat
- ✓ Sneezing
- ✓ Fatigue

How can I avoid triggers?

- ✓ Wear wrap around sunglasses
- ✓ Avoid large grassy areas, woodland, cutting the grass, pollutants and car fumes
- ✓ Keep doors and windows closed, especially when the pollen counts are high (early morning 7am to 9am and early evenings)
- ✓ When you get in from the outside wash your hands, face, hair, rinse your eyes and change your clothes
- ✓ If possible stay indoors when the pollen count is high
- ✓ Use petroleum jelly inside your nose to block inhalation of pollen
- ✓ Don't dry washing outside to avoid pollen sticking to your clothes
- ✓ You could buy a pollen filter for the air vents in the car



What can I do to manage it?

The severity of symptoms can vary, some people need medication to manage their symptoms and others can manage their condition by avoiding triggers.

If treatment is needed a wide range of medicines can be purchased from your local community pharmacy without seeing a doctor.

What treatments can I buy?

Speak to your local community pharmacy to get advice on the best treatment for your symptoms and always read the patient information leaflet that is included with the medicine.

Examples of products available to buy include:

- ✓ Antihistamine tablets and syrup are generally effective at controlling symptoms of hay fever
- ✓ Nasal sprays are useful if you suffer nasal symptoms and can be used instead of, or in addition to, antihistamine tablets
- ✓ Eye drops are useful if your eye symptoms are not controlled by antihistamine tablets
- ✓ Simple pain relief like paracetamol can help with headaches and sinus pain

Find out more

We want to support you to be more self care aware. You can speak to your local pharmacist about how to avoid triggers and how to treat your hay fever.

Search 'hay fever' on NHS Choices for more information.



This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as easy read or large print, and may be available in alternative languages, upon request.

Please contact hrccg.accessibility@nhs.net or phone 01273 403687.