



UnityHealth

Help For Hayfever.

What is Hayfever?

Hayfever is a common condition in the UK and affects about 1 In 5 people. It is caused when the body's immune system overreacts to pollen. Sufferers experience a variety of symptoms which include sneezing, itchy, watery eyes, irritated throat and a runny or blocked nose. The severity of symptoms varies from person to person and also year on year depending upon the pollen count and which pollen you react to

When does Hayfever Occur?

In the UK hayfever symptoms normally occur from late March until mid-September due to the variation in the types of pollen and changes in the weather affecting plant growth.

Tree Pollen -late March until mid-May

Grass Pollen-mid-May until July

Weed Pollen-end June until September

Treatments for Hayfever

In most cases there is no need to visit a GP for hayfever treatment, your local pharmacy has a range of effective treatments available and the pharmacist or trained staff will be happy to advise. Pharmacies own brand products will usually be cheaper. We call these products Over the Counter Treatments (OTC). The NHS does not support the prescribing of hayfever treatments . They are clear that they should be purchased from a pharmacy.

<https://www.buckinghamshireccg.nhs.uk/public/getting-involved/public-engagement-updates/otc/>

Antihistamine tablets can relieve eye, throat and nasal symptoms. Most do not cause drowsiness but always be careful especially if driving as very occasionally people do feel drowsy when taking them.

Eye drops can ease eye symptoms. These need to be used regularly as they have a build up an effect in the eye. These may sting when first used especially if the eyes have been rubbed. They are not suitable with most contact lenses.

Steroid nasal sprays can relieve all symptoms and are best started a month before anticipated hayfever symptoms. If you are already severely congested then use a decongestant nasal spray for 3 days before starting to use the steroid spray to ease symptoms.

Sometimes you will need a combination of products (a tablet+nasal spary+ eye drop but do not take more than one type of tablet on any one day) to adequately control their symptoms but never exceed the doses specified on the label. If a product doesn't help then switch to another rather than be tempted to take extra doses.

Lifestyle Actions

Lifestyle changes can help reduce contact with pollen during the hayfever season and lessen symptoms:

DO:

Put Vaseline around your nostrils to trap pollen and/or use a nasal rinse to wash away pollen.

Wear wraparound sunglasses and a peaked cap to protect eyes and face from pollen.

Shower, wash hair and change clothes after being outside to wash off pollen.

Pollen count is highest early morning and during the evening so try to stay inside then.

Keep windows and doors shut whenever possible.

Vacuum regularly and use damp dusting techniques.

Keep car windows shut and use a pollen filter on airvents where possible.

Wipes dogs with a damp microfiber cloth after walking as they trap pollen on their fur.

DON'T

Cut grass or walk through grass

Smoke/passively smoking as this worsens symptoms

Spend any longer outside than necessary

Dry clothes outside, pollen ends up being deposited on the clothes

Have fresh flowers in the house if you have a flower pollen allergy.

Treatment Options

Oral Treatments for Adults and Children 12+

Generic Name	Brands Available	Dose	Notes
Cetirizine 10mg	Piriteze Benadryl One a Day Own brands	One tablet daily	Rarely causes drowsiness but if affected do not drive
Loratadine 10mg	Clarityn Own Brands	One tablet Daily	Rarely causes drowsiness but if affected do not drive
Acrivastine 8mg	Benadryl Allergy Relief	One tablet up to three times a day	Rarely causes drowsiness but if affected do not drive. Do not take grapefruit juice with capsules.

Chlorphenamine 30mg	Piriton Own Brands	One tablet every four-six hours. Maximum of 6 in 24 hours.	May cause drowsiness. If affected do not drive or operate machinery. Avoid alcoholic drink.
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Oral Treatments for Children

Generic name	Brand	12+yrs	6-12yrs	2-6yrs	Notes
Cetirizine	Piriteze Tabs Own brands	One daily	Half a tablet twice a day	NO	
	Piriteze Syrup Benadryl Syrup	10ml daily	5ml twice a day	2.5ml twice a day	Banana flavour
Loratadine	Clarityn tabs Own Brand	One daily	One daily*	Not if under 30kg	*Suggest tablets should not be used until child weighs 30kg
	Boots Hayfever and Allergy Relief Syrup	10ml Daily	Weighs 30+kg- 10ml daily Less than 30kg but 2 years or over – 5ml daily		
Chlorphenamine	Piriton Tablets	One every 4-6 hours	Half a tablet every 4-6 hours	NO	
	Piriton Syrup	10ml every 4-6 hours	5ml every 4-6 hours	2.5ml every 4-6 hours	1-2yrs can take 2.5ml twice a day.

Eye Drops

Sodium Cromoglicate (Opticrom, Own Brands, Optrex Hayfever) 2% is suitable for adults and children 6+. Use regularly four times a day.

Nasal Sprays

Steroid nasal sprays are an effective treatment that can now be purchased OTC for treatment of Seasonal Rhinitis only. If possible they should be started before symptoms have begun. They can only be purchased for use by adults 18+, they may be prescribed by a GP for younger people for use under medical supervision.

Becomethasone (Beconase, Own Brands) One squirt in each nostril twice a day.

Fluticasone (Pirinase) Two squirts in each nostril daily reducing to one squirt once symptoms under control.

Mometasone (Clarinaze) Two squirts in each nostril daily reducing to one squirt once symptoms under control.

When to Contact the GP

If you have a condition affecting your breathing e.g. asthma or COPD use any “preventer” inhaler regularly and always have a blue “reliever” to hand. If you experience breathlessness not helped by the reliever call the surgery.

If you experience swelling of lips/mouth or tongue or difficulty breathing treat as a medical emergency. Dial 999

If a combination of OTC products as outlined above has been used regularly for at least two weeks and has not provided sufficient relief and the symptoms are affecting you severely then contact the GP. Most hayfever treatments are now available OTC but the GP does have a couple of other options to try in very severe cases.

If you are pregnant or breast-feeding contact GP for advice.

If your symptoms seem unusually severe or you feel particularly unwell call the surgery.