

Hay Fever

Hay fever season is here!

Hay fever (seasonal allergic rhinitis) is very common and affects up to 1 in 5 people in the UK. Symptoms may include sneezing, a runny or blocked nose, itchy/watery red eyes, breathlessness, headaches, blocked sinuses and throat irritation.

In line with NHS England guidance, GP practices do not routinely prescribe treatments that are available to buy over the counter for self-care conditions, including mild to moderate hay fever.

Most people can successfully manage their symptoms using treatments available from pharmacies, supermarkets, or online retailers.



Top tips:

- Check pollen forecasts and limit outdoor exposure when levels are high
- Keep windows closed at home and in the car during high pollen days
- Avoid smoking or smoky environments
- Do not dry clothes outdoors
- Shower and change clothes after being outdoors
- Wear sunglasses to help protect your eyes from pollen
- Apply a small amount of petroleum jelly around the nostrils to trap pollen
- Shower and change your clothes after you have been outdoors

Medications available over the counter:

Your **community pharmacist** can advise you on the most suitable option. Common treatments include:

Antihistamine tablets

- Cetirizine
- Loratadine
- Fexofenadine

Nasal steroid sprays

- Beclometasone
- Fluticasone

When to contact your GP practice:

Please contact the practice if:

- You have **tried appropriate over-the-counter treatments without improvement**
- Your symptoms are **severe or significantly affecting your daily life despite over the counter medications**
- You have **asthma that is worsening due to allergies e.g. wheezing, breathlessness**
- **Pregnant or Breastfeeding**
- **Children <2yrs**
- Symptoms suggest another condition (e.g. sinus infection)

Your pharmacist can also advise if further medical review may be needed.

More info:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever/>
- <https://wyhealthiertogether.nhs.uk/parents/carers/worried-your-child-unwell/hayfever>
- <https://www.allergyuk.org/about-allergy/types-of-allergies/hayfever/>
- <https://patient.info/allergies-blood-immune/hay-fever-leaflet>