

What is Hayfever?

Hayfever is the common name given to cold-like symptoms caused by inhaling plant pollens at certain times of the year.

The UK pollen season:

Tree Pollens March – April

Grass Pollen May - July

Peak in June and July

Weed Pollen June – August

Mould Spores September – October

When people who are allergic to plant pollen breathe it in, it causes the lining inside the airway to swell, this is called inflammation.

It commonly affects the nose (rhinitis), eyes (conjunctivitis) throat and ears and can affect the lungs. Inflammation of the lining inside the nose is called rhinitis. Hayfever is often referred to as Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis.

It occurs at particular times of the year when the various plants release their pollen. Pollen is one of many allergens which can cause allergic responses.

Hayfever affects one in four people in the UK and approximately nine out of ten hayfever sufferers are allergic to grass pollen.

Some individuals are allergic to both tree and grass pollen and will have symptoms that last for several months of the year.

Treatment of Hayfever

- Avoiding exposure to pollen in the air
- Be aware of the pollen count
- Avoid the countryside when the pollen count is high
- Keep your windows shut when travelling in a car and ensure your car has a pollen filter
- Avoid being outdoors at times when the pollen count is high, for example, when the air is warming in the mornings and cooling in the evenings
- Keep the bedroom windows closed early morning and evening when the pollen concentration is high
- Hide your pillow under the bed covers during the day to prevent pollen from settling on it when the windows are open
- Wear glasses to protect your eyes from pollen when outside ☒ Wash your face and hair and change your clothes when coming indoors on days when the pollen count is high
- Wipe Vaseline around your nose and eyes to trap pollen and prevent some from entering your nose and eyes
- Consider using a nasal air filter - www.nasalairfilter.com
- Carry out nasal douching - www.sterimarnasal.co.uk, www.neilmed.com/uk

Medication

For many people hayfever symptoms can be controlled with over the counter medication: steroid nose sprays, antihistamine tablets/syrup/nose sprays and eye drops. Ask a **pharmacist** to guide you if you have never bought this type of medication before.

Saline sprays/ douches are not medicated but will support nasal hygiene, wash away any trapped allergens such as pollen and therefore help reduce symptoms. Adults and children will benefit from nasal douching as preparation to clean the nose before using a steroid nasal spray. This is also useful after being exposed to airborne allergens in everyday activities.

Over the Counter Medications

Which medication is most effective for which symptom?

SYMPTOM MEDICATION EXAMPLES

Blocked nose - Steroidal nasal spray are the most effective treatment for all nasal symptoms and may also help reduce eye symptoms. They can be used together with eye drops and antihistamine medication.

Steroid nasal spray e.g. Fluticasone or Beclometasone

Itchy eyes, Watery eyes

Eye drops- sodium cromoglycate eye drops

Antihistamine tablets/ syrups

Oral tablets or syrups e.g. Loratidine or Cetirizine