

Don't let

HAY FEVER

ruin your day

- **Do you know you can get your hay fever medicines from your local pharmacy?**
- **You don't need a GP appointment or prescription – just talk to your community pharmacist.**

Changes to the NHS prescriptions for hay fever treatments:

Following recent consultations, the NHS has introduced changes to the prescribing guidance for over-the-counter medications. In line with these changes, most patients no longer need to see their GP for hayfever treatments. Pharmacists can offer advice on how to treat hay fever and how to avoid triggers. The common treatments for hay fever such as tablets, eye drops and nasal sprays can all be purchased from your local pharmacy without a prescription and at a lower cost.

Save yourself time, and save the NHS money, see your pharmacist.

How should hay fever be managed now?

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, pharmacists can provide advice and offer a wide range of medications which can be purchased from pharmacies and supermarkets. These medicines are often cheaper than medicines on prescription. Where initial advice and medication has been given by your pharmacist, if symptoms persist please seek further advice from your community pharmacist in the first instance.

When should you see your GP?

- If you require treatment all year round.
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- If you experience any breathlessness, tightness in your chest or any wheezing.
- When referred by a pharmacist.

What treatments can you buy?

Speak to your local pharmacist 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:

<p>Antihistamine tablets and syrup</p>	<p><u>Antihistamines are more effective if they are taken before symptoms start rather than after.</u> Some older antihistamine tablets such as chlorphenamine can cause drowsiness. Newer antihistamines cause less drowsiness and include cetirizine, loratadine, and acrivastine. If you drive or operate machinery ask your community pharmacist which tablets would be best for you.</p>
<p>Nasal sprays</p>	<p>Steroid nasal sprays suppress the allergic reaction and inflammation of hay fever and take at least 3 days to work. <u>They are best started before the hay fever season begins and used throughout the season even if your symptoms have improved.</u> Nasal decongestant sprays are useful if you suffer from a blocked nose. However, they should only be used for 7 days as longer use can cause rebound congestion and block your nose up again. You may find inhalants (eucalyptus, menthol and Olbas Oil) helpful to ease blocked and stuffy noses.</p>
<p>Eye drops</p>	<p>If your eye symptoms are not controlled by oral antihistamines, eye drops containing sodium cromoglicate or lodoxamide may be useful. If you wear contact lenses you should check with a community pharmacist or your optician before using eye drops.</p>
<p>Other useful treatments</p>	<p>Simple pain relief (e.g. paracetamol or ibuprofen) can help with headaches and sinus pain. Throat lozenges can help ease tickly throats and palates. Decongestant tablets should relieve blocked noses.</p>

How can you avoid triggers?

- Keep house and car windows closed, especially when the pollen count is high (early morning between 7am to 9am and evenings between 5pm and 7pm).
- Avoid large grassy areas, woodland, cutting the grass, pollutants and car fumes.
- Wear wrap-around sunglasses.
- When you get in from 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.
- Keep your house clean and wear a mask and glasses when doing house work.
- 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.
- Create a yearly reminder to start your treatment before your symptoms begin.

More information is available at:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Hay-fever/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/hayfever/Pages/Hayfeverhome.aspx>

<http://www.patient.co.uk/health/hay-fever>