

# Hay Fever Treatment Update Feb 2019 – OTC

Mild to moderate hay fever/ seasonal rhinitis is listed by NHS England as a condition for which over the counter (OTC) medicines should not be routinely prescribed in primary care. NHS England has not identified any routine exceptions. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/otc-guidance-for-ccgs.pdf>

Most people with mild to moderate symptoms are able to relieve their symptoms with OTC treatments recommended by a pharmacist and self-care measures to avoid exposure to allergens. A patient information leaflet on hay fever is available: [link](#)

There is a wide range of OTC treatments available from pharmacies, supermarkets and other retail outlets. Generic or “own label” versions are usually the most cost-effective. There are some restrictions to OTC sale and so an NHS prescription may be needed in some circumstances.

Fexofenadine is not available OTC. Patients currently prescribed fexofenadine 120mg for hay fever should be encouraged to buy an alternative antihistamine OTC. Fexofenadine should be reserved for patients who are intolerant of or unresponsive to cetirizine or loratadine.

The table below lists some of the common OTC hay fever medications available. There are also many non-drug preparations on the market eg allergen barrier nasal sprays, nasal rinses etc.

	Medication	OTC restrictions – see SPC for full details	Common brands (list is not exhaustive)	Class	Price
<b>ANTIHISTAMINES</b>	Cetirizine 10mg tablets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children &lt; 6 years - tablets,</li> <li>• Children &lt; 2 years - solution (depending on the brand)</li> <li>• Renal impairment</li> <li>• Rare hereditary problems of fructose intolerance</li> <li>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</li> <li>• Epilepsy</li> </ul>	Zirtek Allergy Relief® Piriteze Allergy® Benadryl Allergy One a Day® Allacan®; BecoAllergy® Zirtek Allergy Relief for Children® Benadryl Allergy Children’s Solution®	GSL/P depending on product and pack sizes	From 99p for 30 generic tablets
	Cetirizine 1mg/ml solution				From £2.49 for 70mL solution
	Loratadine 10mg Tablets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children &lt; 6 years - tablets,</li> <li>• Children &lt; 2 years – syrup and fast dissolving tablet</li> <li>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</li> <li>• Liver impairment</li> <li>• Rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, the Lapp lactase deficiency or glucose- galactose malabsorption</li> </ul>	Clarityn Allergy® Clarityn Rapide® Fast dissolving tablet	GSL/P depending on pack sizes	From 99p for 30 generic tablets
	Loratadine 5mg/5ml syrup				RRP £4.49 for 70mL Clarityn Allergy Syrup®
	Chlorphenamine 4mg tablets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children &lt; 6 years - tablets,</li> <li>• Children &lt; 1 years - solution</li> <li>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</li> <li>• Taking MAOIs in last 14 days</li> <li>• Caution in epilepsy; raised IOP including glaucoma; prostatic hypertrophy; severe hypertension or CVD; bronchitis, bronchiectasis or asthma; hepatic or renal impairment</li> <li>• Rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, Lapp lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption</li> </ul>	Piriton® Allerief®	P	RRP £2.99 for 30 Pollenase antihistamine tablets®
	Chlorphenamine 2mg/5ml solution				RRP £3.36 for 150mL Allerief® Syrup

	Acrivastine 8mg capsules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children under 12 years</li> <li>• Adults over 65 years</li> <li>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</li> <li>• Renal impairment</li> <li>• Rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, Lapp lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption</li> </ul>	Benadryl Allergy Relief®	GSL/P depending on pack sizes	RRP £5.49 for 12 capsules (GSL) £9.34 for 24 capsules (P)
<b>NASAL SPRAYS</b>	Beclomethasone 0.05% nasal spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children under 18 years</li> <li>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</li> </ul>	Beconase Hayfever® Beconase Hayfever relief for adults 0.05%®	GSL/P depending on pack sizes	From £3.49 for 100 sprays
	Fluticasone 0.05% nasal spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children under 18 years</li> <li>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</li> <li>• Taking medication for HIV</li> </ul>	Pirinase Hayfever Relief for Adults 0.05% Nasal Spray® Pirinase Allergy 0.05% Nasal Spray®	GSL/P	RRP £8.69 for 60 sprays
	Triamcinolone 55 mcg/dose nasal spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children under 18 years</li> <li>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</li> </ul>	Nasacort Allergy Nasal Spray®	P	RRP £5.17 for 30 sprays
	Budesonide 64 mcg/dose nasal spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children under 18 years</li> <li>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</li> </ul>	Benacort 64 micrograms Nasal Spray®	P	RRP £9.99 for 120 sprays
	Xylometazoline 0.1% Nasal Spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children under 12 years</li> <li>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</li> <li>• Taking MAOIs in last 14 days</li> <li>• Recent neurosurgery, hypertension, CVD, hyperthyroidism, narrow angle glaucoma, diabetes mellitus.</li> </ul>	Otrivine Allergy Relief 0.1% Nasal Spray® Otrivine Congestion Relief 0.1% Nasal Spray®	GSL	From £1.99 for 10mL
	Oxymetazoline 0.05% Nasal Spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children under 12 years</li> <li>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</li> <li>• Taking MAOIs in last 14 days</li> <li>• CVD, hyperthyroidism, angle closure glaucoma or prostatic enlargement.</li> </ul>	Galpharm Blocked Nose Relief Nasal Spray	GSL	From 99p for 15mL
<b>EYE DROPS</b>	Sodium cromoglicate 2% eye drops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children under 6 years</li> <li>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</li> </ul>	Opticrom Hayfever® Allercrom® Optrex Hayfever Relief®	GSL	From £2.99 for 10mL
	Xylometazoline 0.05% Antazoline 0.5% eye drops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children under 12 years</li> <li>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</li> <li>• Presence of narrow angle glaucoma</li> <li>• Use with contact lenses</li> <li>• Taking MAOIs in last 14 days</li> <li>• CVD, arrhythmia, hypertension, hyperthyroidism diabetes mellitus, phaeochromocytomas, urinary retention</li> </ul>	Otrivine-Antistin®	P	RRP £5.48 for 10mL

Items of medication that can be purchased “over the counter” (OTC) are classified in two ways:

- P (Pharmacy only) - these items can only be purchased from a pharmacy
- GSL (General Sales List) – these items can be purchased from a pharmacy, supermarket or other store.

P and GSL items can only be purchased for their licensed indications and often in limited quantities. Please see above the circumstances where it will be necessary to prescribe an OTC item (if appropriate) as it will not be possible to purchase it due to the restrictions of the licence.

Prices from Chemist & Druggist February 19 & personal observation.

RRP (Recommended Retail Price)