

hayfever **treatment guide**



hayfever

are you treating it right?



Hayfever is caused by the body's defences overreacting to pollen released into the air by plants. The pollen causes the release of a substance called Histamine from cells in the skin. Histamine stimulates the allergic reaction that causes many of the symptoms such as sneezing, sore and runny eyes, blocked nose and ears, sinus pain and tickly throat or itchy palate. • Different pollens are present at different times of the spring and summer, so when you are affected depends upon which pollen you are allergic to. Muggy weather and poor air quality can also aggravate the situation. • So, what's the most effective way to treat hayfever? Staying away from pollen is the ideal prevention – but not always practical. A simple 'treatment tree' is shown on page 4 to help you deal with your hayfever effectively – so you can concentrate on enjoying your summer!

How to **help yourself**

THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS YOU CAN DO TO AVOID CONTACT WITH POLLEN AND SO LESSEN SYMPTOMS:

- **High 5!** : Stay inside with doors and windows closed when pollen counts are at their highest - between 5pm and 7pm, and 7am and 9am.
- **Sleep soundly** : Keep windows closed when you're in bed at night. It may also help to wash your hair if you've been outside, as pollen could be trapped in your hair.
- **Summer-clean!** : Keep pollen and dust out of your home by vacuuming and damp-dusting regularly. When you get home after a walk in the country, change your clothes and brush your pets – they could be carrying pollen too!
- **Shady days** : Always wear close-fitting sunglasses when you go outside.
- **Confirm the Count**: Pollen counts are usually broadcast along with the weather, or be prepared by checking www.allergyadvice.co.uk for a four-day forecast.
- **No-go areas** : Try to avoid areas, of high pollen concentration, such as gardens, parks and woodland (especially if the grass has just been cut). If you need to work in these areas, a mask and goggles may help.
- **Fuming** : Try to avoid unnecessary irritants such as pollution and car fumes.

For more information on hayfever visit www.chic.org.uk

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A full range of effective medication for hayfever is available over the counter from pharmacies. There are four types of hayfever product:

- Oral antihistamines
- Nasal preparations
- Oral decongestants
- Eye preparations

If you only suffer some symptoms and you prefer a specific product, check the 'Treatment Tree' to find the product which suits you best.

Ask your pharmacist for the most suitable treatment

Some hayfever products are not suitable if you're taking certain other medicines, and some shouldn't be taken by children or pregnant women.

If at all unsure, ask your pharmacist for advice. Some older antihistamine treatments may

cause drowsiness, but newer ones are unlikely to. If you drive or operate machinery, ask your pharmacist for the most suitable treatment for you.

• **Oral antihistamines**

Antihistamines are generally effective in controlling the typical symptoms of hayfever: sneezing, running nose, watery eyes and



itching nose and throat. They are more effective if they are taken before the symptoms occur – rather than after they have started.

Treatment choices include:

- Benadryl Allergy Relief Capsules or One a Day Tablets
- Claritin Allergy Tablets and Syrup
- Histergan Syrup
- Piriteze Tablets
- Piriton Allergy Tablets and Syrup
- Zirtek Allergy Tablets

• Nasal preparations

These are suitable if you only suffer nasal symptoms. Most can be used throughout the hayfever season. Ask your pharmacist for advice.

Anti-inflammatory and antihistamine sprays

These work by suppressing or blocking the allergic response and reducing the inflammation and



swelling that can be caused by hayfever. For best results start using before the hayfever season begins, as they take about 3 days to start working. You should use these products throughout the season even if your symptoms seem to have improved.

Treatment choices:

- Beconase Hayfever Spray
- Care Hayfever Relief Nasal Spray
- Flixonase Allergy Nasal Spray
- Livostin Direct Nasal Spray

Nasal decongestants

These can help relieve a blocked nose, but they can cause ‘rebound congestion’ and should not be used for more than about a week at a time.

Treatment choices:

- Fenox Drops and Spray
- Otrivine Drops and Spray

Inhalants

Products containing natural essential oils such as eucalyptus, mint and menthol, can be inhaled to ease a stuffy nose.

Treatment choices:

- Happinose
- Olbas Oil

• Oral decongestants

If you’re congested, you may prefer a tablet to a nasal spray. These can be used for longer periods than nasal decongestants.

Treatment choices:

- Contac
- Sudafed

• Eye preparations

Most eye symptoms caused by hayfever will be controlled by oral

antihistamines. If your eyes are particularly troublesome or if your hayfever symptoms only occur in the eyes, you may find it helps to use some eye drops. These preparations contain antihistamine or anti-inflammatory ingredients.

Antihistamines

Treatment choices:

- Aller-eze Eye Drops
- Livostin Direct Eyedrops



Anti-inflammatories

Treatment choices:

- Claritin Allergy Eyedrops
- Opticrom Allergy Eyedrops
- Optrex Allergy Eyedrops

Antihistamine and decongestant

Treatment choices:

- Otrivine-Antistin eye-drops

If you wear contacts always check with your pharmacist or optometrist before using eye drops. You should see your GP if any of the following applies to you:

You are experiencing:

- Wheezing
- Breathlessness
- Tightness in the chest

You:

- Are pregnant
- Are breastfeeding

hayfever

treatment tree

Have you got the main symptoms of hayfever - sneezing, runny nose, blocked nose, itchy nose and throat, watering eyes?

YES

Refer to the Treatment Guide for a list of antihistamine products that will help relieve your symptoms. Ask your pharmacist for advice if you're still not sure of the best way to treat your hayfever this summer.

Oral antihistamines will treat most symptoms of hayfever. If you suffer badly with any of the symptoms below, use the treatments in the boxes as well as or instead of an antihistamine.

