



Hay fever

You have been given this leaflet because you have asked for hay fever treatment that you can get “over the counter” (OTC) from pharmacies, supermarkets and some other shops. After a local and national public consultation on OTC medicines, we do not prescribe simple hay fever treatment anymore. Hay fever is a common allergy and most people with mild to moderate symptoms are able to treat themselves with OTC medicines.

How can I avoid triggers/ suggested lifestyle changes

- 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

How do I treat hay fever?

If treatment is needed a wide range of medications can be purchased from community pharmacies and supermarkets without seeing a doctor. “Generic” non-branded products usually offer the best value for money. **Speak to your pharmacist** - for advice if you're not sure which type of medicine is best for you and your symptoms.

Examples of products available to buy include

(Some products may have age restrictions)

- Antihistamine tablets containing cetirizine, loratadine or acrivastine
- Antihistamine liquids containing chlorphenamine, loratadine or cetirizine
- Eye drops containing sodium cromoglicate
- Nasal sprays containing beclometasone, fluticasone or triamcinolone

When should I seek advice?

- If you are experiencing wheezing, breathlessness or tightness in the chest
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding
- If your symptoms are not relieved by over the counter treatments in combination with measures to reduce your exposure to pollen
- If you are suffering from very severe photophobia (aversion to light), painful ears or sinuses, severe coughing and swollen lymph glands
- Your symptoms are getting worse

For more information

- Visit your local pharmacy for advice

Find out more about self-care at www.nhs.uk

Be self-care aware