



Be prepared for

hay fever season

What exactly is hay fever?

Hay fever, or seasonal allergic rhinitis, occurs because your immune system is sensitive to pollen, most commonly grass pollen. One in four adults in the UK suffers from allergic rhinitis. Over half of these people are allergic to grass pollen.

When you inhale pollen, your body overreacts, leading to symptoms such as itchy eyes, a runny or blocked nose, sneezing and wheezing. For some people these symptoms can be so severe that they affect everyday life. For example, allergic rhinitis can disrupt sleep, reduce work productivity, affect studies or make it difficult to enjoy outdoor activities during the summer.

Hay fever symptoms can be controlled. If your hay fever is NOT controlled, you and your doctor or pharmacist can work out the best treatment plan for you.



The Symptoms

People tend to think that hay fever occurs in the peak summer months, but for some sufferers, hay fever starts as early as March and lasts through to the autumn.

The symptoms (see below) are essentially the same, but with different severities:

Itching of the eyes, nose and back of the throat

Blocked or runny nose

Sneezing

Coughing and/or wheezing

Occasionally headache and earache

These symptoms may be complicated by loss of a sense of smell, and wheezing or a feeling of tightness in the chest.

What can be done to treat hay fever?

Avoiding the cause

Avoiding pollen may not always be possible. Grass pollen particles are airborne and very tiny, so even if you live in a town or city you can't really escape.

Knowing what type of pollen causes your hay fever, and when, may help you plan trips away and holidays. (The pollen calendar in this leaflet may help you identify what you are allergic to.) See also the Top Tips for further advice on how you can avoid pollen.

Antihistamines

One of the most common treatments for hay fever, antihistamines are usually effective at treating mild to moderate symptoms such as itchy eyes and sneezing.

Most antihistamines can be purchased without a prescription. Ask your pharmacist for advice on which antihistamines are most suitable for you as some may cause drowsiness. They may be taken after symptoms have started. Most are taken on a once-daily basis.

Nasal Sprays

Nasal sprays are also used to treat the symptoms of hay fever. Again, many nasal sprays can be purchased without a prescription. Ask your pharmacist for advice and guidance on the correct administration technique.

Immunotherapy

Immunotherapy is a treatment which helps reduce your body's reaction to pollen.

It contains a small amount of the pollen that you are allergic to – this helps your body to overcome your allergy by teaching your immune system to react to pollen in a more normal way.

Immunotherapy may be particularly helpful when antihistamines and/or nasal sprays have failed to adequately control your hay fever symptoms. Speak to your doctor as you may need referral to a specialist for this treatment.

TOP TIPS

- 1 Check the pollen count before going out
- 2 Put petroleum jelly under your nostrils, it helps to stop the pollen going into your respiratory tract
- 3 Wear wrap-around sunglasses to prevent eye irritation. Used tea bags kept in the fridge also make a great compress to relieve swollen or puffy eyes
- 4 Keep your windows closed in the late afternoon, when the pollen count rises
- 5 Avoid cutting grass or wear a protective disposable mask
- 6 Drive with your car windows shut
- 7 Take a trip to the coast where there is less pollen

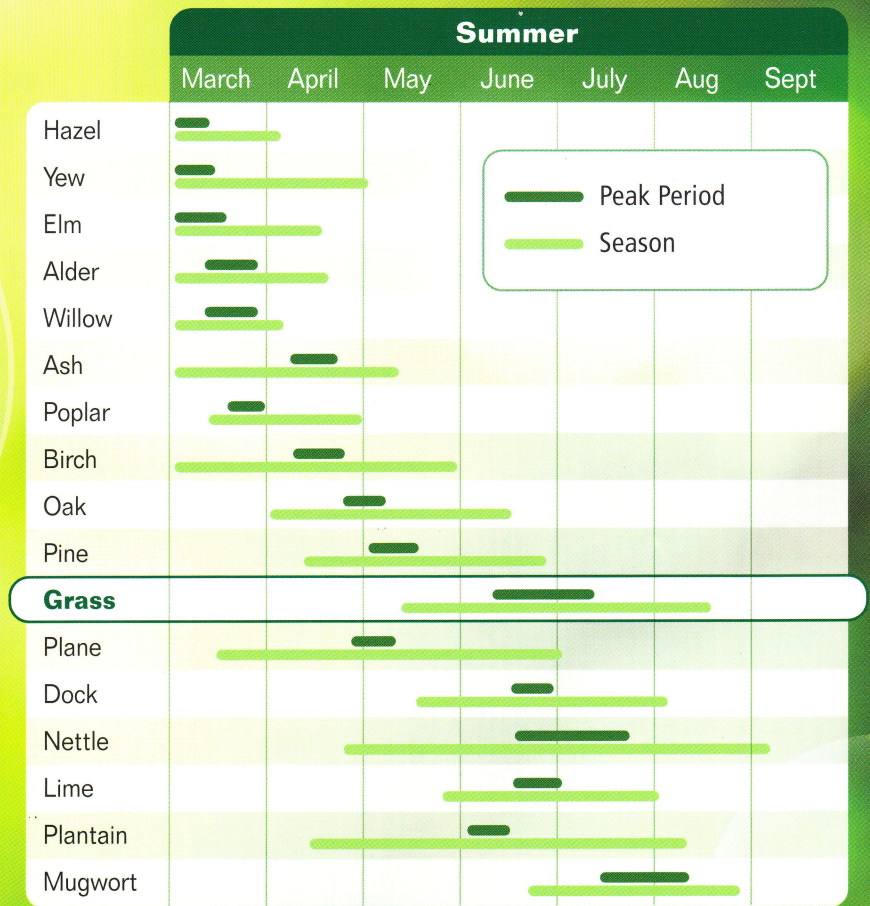
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Which pollens cause your allergy?

Mark the months when your hay fever occurs on the calendar and then compare it with the plant pollen pattern to see which pollens may cause your allergies. The most common cause of hay fever between May and July is grass pollen.

Adapted with kind permission from NPARU

The calendar shows the general pattern of pollens in the UK. The exact timing and severity will vary from year to year depending on weather and region.



Allergy screening questionnaire

Please take a short while to answer the following questions. These questions are intended to act as a guide, showing how affected you are by allergic type symptoms.

Please hand the completed questionnaire to your doctor or nurse.

Date:

PATIENT DETAILS – PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

First name

Surname

D.O.B

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1 In the course of a year, how often do you usually get the following symptoms?

- Itchy nose
- Urge to sneeze, sneezing fits
- Runny nose, rhinitis
- Stuffy nose
- Itching, burning, red eyes

Never/Occasionally	Frequently
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1

2 Are these symptoms particularly frequent or severe...

- ...in spring or summer?
- ...when you are close to meadows, fields or trees?
- ...when you are close to animals? (cats, dogs, horses etc.)
- ...when you are lying in bed at night?
- ...in rooms with rugs or wall-to-wall carpets?
- ...when you eat particular foods?

No	Yes
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 3
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 5
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 3
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 2
<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 2

3 When you get these symptoms, how ill do you feel that day?

Please rate how ill you feel by marking a cross in the most appropriate box.

Do not feel ill at all											Feel very ill		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
0 points						2 points							

Please mark a cross on the coloured strip to indicate the total score

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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Very low/low probability of an allergic respiratory disease

Mid/high probability of an allergic respiratory disease

Total Score:

If you have scored 7 or more, it is likely that you are suffering from an allergic respiratory disease, commonly known as hay fever. Don't let hay fever get the better of you, speak to your doctor.

Have you ever been diagnosed by a doctor as having allergy to...

- ...pollen?
- ...mites, house dust mites?
- ...animal hair?
- ...foods?
- ...some other allergy?

Yes
<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>

Be prepared for summer

Hay fever symptoms can be controlled. If your hay fever is **NOT** controlled, you and your doctor can work out the best treatment plan for you.

Some hay fever treatments may take a long time to work and some people with severe hay fever need an appointment with a specialist, so it is important to consult your doctor well ahead of the hay fever season.

Use this card to remind yourself to make an appointment with your doctor.

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