

Self-care for hay fever (seasonal allergic rhinitis)

Please note we are no longer able to prescribe antihistamine tablets for the treatment of hay fever as per Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board guidelines as most antihistamine medications are available from a pharmacy or supermarket. We can prescribe nasal sprays to patients under the age of 18 if deemed suitable and for adults who do not have control of nasal symptoms, despite use of over the counter steroid nasal sprays.

How is allergic rhinitis treated?

The guidance for this comes under 2 headings:

1. **Avoidance of the allergen**
2. **Pharmacotherapy (the medicines available)**

Avoidance of the allergen

Minimising exposure is a crucial part of the management. The following measures can also be helpful for pollen allergic people:

- Put petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline) around your nostrils to trap pollen
- Wear wraparound sunglasses, a mask or a wide-brimmed hat to stop pollen getting into your nose and eyes
- Shower and change your clothes after you have been outside to wash pollen off
- Keep windows and doors shut as much as possible
- Vacuum regularly and dust with a damp cloth
- Try to use a pollen filter in the air vents of your car if you have one, and a HEPA filter in your vacuum cleaner

Pharmacotherapy

Speak to a pharmacist if you have hay fever – they can give you advice and suggest the best treatments to help with symptoms, such as:

- **Antihistamine tablets or nasal sprays** – these are most effective if symptoms are mild or for sneezing or an itchy, runny nose, but not for a blocked nose or moderate to severe symptoms. Some antihistamines can make you sleepy, so speak to your pharmacist about non-drowsy antihistamines if you need to.
- **Steroid nasal sprays** – these are most effective for a blocked nose or moderate to severe symptoms. The regular use of a non-absorbed corticosteroid nasal spray to treat the inflammation is recommended, especially if a blocked nose is the problem. In addition, starting treatment 2-3 weeks prior to the hay fever season is often recommended.
- **Eye drops** – antihistamines and steroid nasal sprays often control eye symptoms as well, but eye drops are available over the counter. All treatments should be taken regularly as it is more difficult to control symptoms that are already well established.

Please see the table below for SNEE ICB recommended treatments:

Generic name	Brand names include: (pharmacy/supermarket own brands may be available)	Formulation	Age suitability	Legal Classification (Pharmacy only or General Sales List (GSL) – may vary dependent upon brand
ACRIVASTINE	BENADRYL ALLERGY RELIEF®	Capsules	12 to 65 years	GSL
ANTAZOLINE & XYLOMETAZOLINE	OTRIVINE-ANTISTIN®	Eye drops	12 years and over	Pharmacy only
BECLOMETASONE*	BECONASE®, POLLENASE® (N.B. The brand Nasobec® is a POM but patients can purchase other brands of beclometasone)	Nasal spray *	18 years and over	GSL
BUDESONIDE	BENACORT HAYFEVER RELIEF® (N.B. Rhinocort aqua® is a POM but patients can purchase other brands of budesonide)	Nasal spray	18 years and over	GSL
CETIRIZINE	BENADRYL ALLERGY CHILDRENS LIQUID®	Liquid 1	2 years and over	GSL except for children aged 2-5 years: Pharmacy only
	ZIRTEK®, PIRITEZE®	Tablets *	6 years and over	GSL
	BENADRYL ALLERGY LIQUID RELEASE CAPSULES®	Capsules	12 years and over	GSL
CHLORPHENAMINE*	PIRITON®, ALLERIEF®	Liquid	1 year and over	Pharmacy only
		Tablets	6 years and over	Pharmacy only
CLEMASTINE	TAVEGIL®	Tablets	1 year and over	Pharmacy only
FEXOFENADINE 120mg	ALLEVIA®, TREATHAY®	Tablets	12 years and over	GSL
FLUTICASONE	PIRINASE®, NASOFAN® (N.B. Avamys® and Flixonase® are POM but patients can purchase other brands of fluticasone)	Nasal spray	18 years and over	GSL
LORATADINE*	CLARITYN®	Tablets *	6 years and over AND weighing more than 30kg	GSL
		Liquid *	2 years and over	GSL
MOMETASONE	CLARINAZE ALLERGY CONTROL® (N.B. Nasonex® is a POM but patients can purchase other brands of mometasone)	Nasal spray *	18 years and over	Pharmacy only
SODIUM CROMOGLICATE	OPTICROM ALLERGY®, , OPTREX HAYFEVER RELIEF®, POLLENASE HAYFEVER RELIEF®	Eye drops *	6 years and over.	GSL
TRIAMCINOLONE	NASACORT ALLERGY®	Nasal spray	18 years and over	GSL