



**BROADMEADOW MED CENTRE
PHARMACY - NEWSLETTER**

Hay fever

What are the symptoms?

Hay fever (allergic rhinitis) is characterised by a runny nose, nasal congestion and sneezing and can also involve itching of the nose, eyes, ears or throat and can cause watery, red irritated eyes.

Symptoms of hayfever are generally triggered by environmental allergens such as pollen and are often worse at times of high pollen count, for example in the morning.

Hay fever is classified as intermittent (occurring on less than 4 days per week for less than 4 weeks in duration) or persistent which is anything more frequent than this. Symptoms can be mild, moderate or severe, dependant on whether there is a presence or absence of sleep disturbance or impairment in the performance of daily activities.



What are the treatment options?



Allergen avoidance

If the allergen is known!

- Stay inside during the morning hours when pollen counts are highest
- Showering after outdoor exposure to remove pollen that adheres to the hair and skin
- Washing bedding weekly in hot water >55°C and vacuuming frequently (at least once a week)



Intranasal corticosteroids (INCS)

eg beclomethasone, budesonide, fluticasone, mometasone and triamcinolone.

- these offer both symptom relief and prevention
- treatment of choice for moderate to severe symptoms
- reduce nasal symptoms (including congestion) and ocular symptoms



Antihistamines

eg cetirizine, desloratadine, fexofenadine, levocetirizine, loratadine

- Provide rapid relief of symptoms such as sneezing and rhinorrhoea
- Similar efficacy between less-sedating antihistamines however there is some inter-patient variability so switching to a different class of antihistamine may be beneficial
- Symptom relief from antihistamine nasal sprays is faster than from INCS



Decongestants

- Topical nasal decongestants can be used if INCS and antihistamines have failed to relieve nasal congestion. They should be used for a maximum of 5 days at a time to avoid rebound congestion
- Oral decongestants can provide rapid relief of nasal congestion, however they are not recommended in people with hypertension, hyperthyroidism or diabetes and are contraindicated in people with coronary heart disease or taking certain types of antidepressant medication



Other treatment options

- Intranasal saline can help decrease nasal stuffiness, rhinorrhoea and sneezing
- Intranasal ipratropium bromide can help decrease rhinorrhoea
- Intranasal sodium cromoglycate can act as a hayfever preventative
- Natural alternatives include vitamin C and quercetin, which decrease histamine levels and may assist in reducing allergy symptoms