

Hay fever

Hay fever is usually worse between late March and September, especially when it's warm, humid and windy. This is when the pollen count is at its highest.

Check if you have hay fever

Symptoms of hay fever include:

- sneezing and coughing
- a runny or blocked nose
- itchy, red or watery eyes
- itchy throat, mouth, nose and ears
- loss of smell
- pain around your temples and forehead
- headache
- earache
- feeling tired

If you have asthma, you might also:

- have a tight feeling in your chest
- be short of breath
- wheeze and cough

Hay fever will last for weeks or months, unlike a cold, which usually goes away after 1 to 2 weeks.

How to treat hay fever yourself

There's currently no cure for hay fever and you can't prevent it. But you can do things to ease your symptoms when the pollen count is high.

Do

- put Vaseline around your nostrils to trap pollen
- wear wraparound sunglasses to stop pollen getting into your eyes
- shower and change your clothes after you've been outside to wash pollen off
- stay indoors whenever possible
- keep windows and doors shut as much as possible
- vacuum regularly and dust with a damp cloth
- buy a pollen filter for the air vents in your car and a vacuum cleaner with a special HEPA filter

Don't

- do not cut grass or walk on grass
- do not spend too much time outside
- do not keep fresh flowers in the house
- do not smoke or be around smoke – it makes your symptoms worse
- do not dry clothes outside – they can catch pollen
- do not let pets into the house if possible – they can carry pollen indoors

Allergy UK has more [tips on managing hay fever](#).

A pharmacist can help with hay fever

Speak to your pharmacist if you have hay fever. They can give advice and suggest the best treatments, like antihistamine drops, tablets or nasal sprays to help with:

- itchy and watery eyes and sneezing
- a blocked nose

[Find a pharmacy](#)

See a GP if:

- your symptoms are getting worse
- your symptoms don't improve after taking medicines from the pharmacy

Treatments for hay fever from a GP

Your GP might prescribe steroids.

If steroids and other hay fever treatments don't work, your GP may refer you for immunotherapy.

This means you'll be given small amounts of pollen as an injection or tablet to slowly build up your immunity to pollen.

This kind of treatment usually starts in the winter about 3 months before the hay fever season begins.

What causes hay fever

Hay fever is an allergic reaction to pollen, typically when it comes into contact with your mouth, nose, eyes and throat. Pollen is a fine powder from plants.

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[Check the pollen forecast](#)

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Call 111

If you can't speak to your GP and don't know what to do next.

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