

HAYFEVER

Warm weather, a bit of wind and pollen – perfect ingredients for the hayfever season! How can you reduce the risk?

What is Hayfever?

- Hayfever is an allergic reaction commonly triggered by grass seed, pollen, mould or dust mites.
- At least one in five people suffers hayfever.
- Animals – cats and dogs – can get hayfever too.

What are the Symptoms of Hayfever?

- Hayfever usually causes sneezing, itchy eyes and nasal congestion or a runny nose. People often get headaches that can be quite severe.
- The nasal discharge is usually clear and runny however, it may turn yellow and sticky. This doesn't necessarily mean you have an infection – it may be your immune system doing its job.
- Some people may get a bleeding nose particularly if they have been blowing it a lot. This isn't anything to worry about unless it bleeds a lot.

What Can be Done to Ease Symptoms at Home?

- Clean your house – regularly wipe down places allergens can accumulate like the top of doorways, fan blades and screens. Clean pet's bedding and vacuum up pet hair.
- Minimise exposure to allergens – use a disposable face mask when mowing the lawn, shower after being outside to reduce pollen or grass seed on skin and stay inside on windy days with the doors and windows shut.
- Ease nasal congestion with an old style inhalations – over a bowl with a towel over the head - using either just steam or eucalyptus oil. While at work, you can do it with just a mug or boiling water cupping your hands around the lip and breathing the steam.
- Make a decongestant – mix a little eucalyptus oil with some light oil such as jojoba and spreading it where you can smell it (such as under your nose) or on a handkerchief. There are also some commercially available essential oil preparations specifically aimed at this!
- Try acupressure to ease runny nose – on the cheek beside the end of the nose, press points press the area right beside the nostrils. The points will be tender so press gently!
- Ease itchy eyes – wash or splash water around your eyes or wash the eyes in a saline eye bath.

Can food help?

- Some foods can aggravate hayfever especially foods can increase phlegm – fried or greasy food or excessive dairy. Some people say that milk in particular causes more phlegm.
- Some foods may help move nasal congestion especially hot/spicy food. But beware – eating too much spicy food can make the hayfever worse!

What Other Treatment that can Help?

- Facial massage can help to move nasal congestion – but make sure you do it gently as the face bruises easily.
- Acupuncture has some great treatments for helping to relieve the symptoms of hayfever.
- Hayfever can impair the immune system so a zinc supplement is a great way to support it.

When Should You See a Doctor

- Hayfever will usually go away by itself but if the symptoms are severe or you develop new symptoms such as shortness of breath it's best to see a doctor.