

# HAYFEVER

Hayfever is the common name for an allergic reaction of the lining of the nose and sinuses. It is mostly triggered (set off) by breathing in pollens of certain grasses, weeds and trees. High pollen levels usually occur in spring and early summer. Some people have allergy symptoms the whole year round. This is usually due to an allergy to animal dander, moulds or house-dust mite.

## Signs and symptoms

### Hay fever

- Sneezing (often, and a lot)
- Runny nose (although it can be blocked)
- Itchy nose
- Puffy, itchy, watery and red eyes
- Tickling, burning throat
- Itchy or lumpy skin.

Because hay fever is due to an allergy, patients often suffer from other allergic conditions such as asthma, eczema or hives. The symptoms of these conditions may worsen at the same time that the hay fever gets worse.

Nasal allergy may also cause sinus problems in some people. Symptoms include:

- Blocked nose and sinuses (congestion)
- Pain, pressure and aching across the sinuses, around the cheeks, eyes and forehead, especially when bending forward. See the *Sinus Problems* Fact Card.

Hayfever symptoms are often worse in the mornings or on windy days.

During the hay fever season, allergy symptoms may last two or three weeks or in some people, a few months. If symptoms do not go away after the usual hayfever season, you may have a perennial or persistent (year-round) allergy.

People who have 'cold' symptoms all the time may actually have an allergy.

Your pharmacist and doctor can help find what you are allergic to by asking questions. A doctor can also arrange allergy tests if needed.

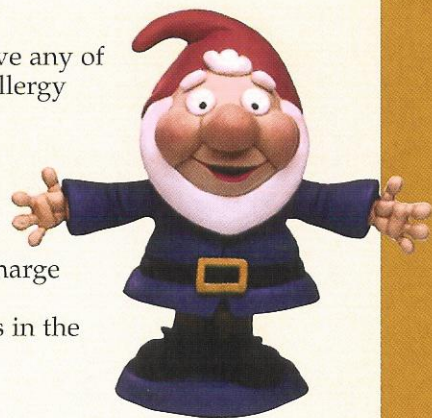
### Self Care

- Talk to a pharmacist or doctor about medicines to help manage your hay fever symptoms.
- Keep house and car windows closed during pollen season.
- Use air conditioning and/or air filtering systems in both home and car during pollen season.
- Wear sunglasses and face masks when mowing lawns or walking in long grass.
- Remove plants that trigger hay fever from your garden.
- Remove mould from walls, curtains etc.
- Keep air conditioners and filters clean.

### Important

See your doctor if you have any of the following with your allergy symptoms:

- High temperature
- Earache
- Swollen glands in the neck
- Yellow or creamy discharge from the nose or eyes
- Yellow or green mucus in the nose
- Shortness of breath or wheezing.



## If you suffer year-round symptoms:

- Keep pets outdoors
- Remove carpets or place plastic covers over carpeted areas
- Replace carpet areas with a hard surface e.g. lino, cork tiles or slate
- Enclose mattress, quilts and pillows in special zippered plastic covers (ask a pharmacist) or use low-allergy bedding products
- Wash bed linen in hot water and leave blankets in the sun for at least four hours to kill dust mites
- Remove sheepskins, hides, feather pillows and quilts from your bedroom
- Make your whole house, or some special parts, smoke free
- Dust with a damp cloth, avoid sweeping
- Repair plumbing leaks to help stop mould growing
- Remove dust collectors such as books, dried flowers, curtains, upholstered furniture, from your bedroom
- Reduce use of room deodorisers, mothballs and insect sprays, or use low-irritant formulas
- Avoid wood-burning fires and kerosene heaters in the home
- Exercise helps clear the nose – swim in an indoor pool or work out in an air-conditioned gym if pollens etc. trigger hay fever.

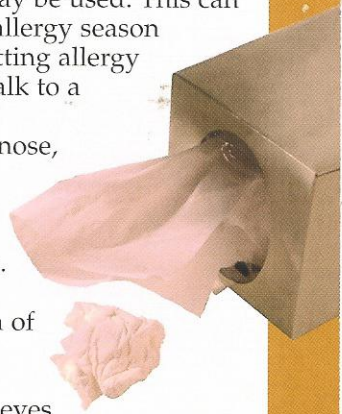
## Medicines

Medicines can not stop you being allergic, but they can relieve or prevent symptoms. Ask a pharmacist or doctor which medicine is best for you.

- For sneezing and an itchy, runny nose, an antihistamine tablet, mixture or nasal spray may help.
- Non-drowsy antihistamines are preferable if driving or doing other activities where you need to be alert.
- To prevent hay fever and possible sinus problems, a preventive medicine (e.g. a

steroid nose spray) may be used. This can be started before the allergy season begins to stop you getting allergy symptoms as often. Talk to a pharmacist.

- For a runny or stuffy nose, decongestant tablets, nose drops or sprays can be used alone or with an antihistamine. Some preparations contain a combination of an antihistamine and decongestant.
- For itchy, red, watery eyes (no pus), antihistamine/decongestant eye drops may help. Ask a pharmacist how to use them (see *Red Eyes* Fact Card).
- To prevent rebound congestion, decongestant nose drops/sprays or eye drops should not be used for more than 4-5 days.
- A saline nose spray or drops can help clear sinuses.
- Sinus pain may be relieved by pain relievers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen (see *Pain Relievers* Fact Card).
- Some other medicines and conditions may be affected by hay fever medicines. Tell your doctor and pharmacist what other medicines you take and ask them what you should be aware of before starting a new medicine for hay fever.



## Other relevant fact cards

- Asthma
- Pain Relievers
- Headache
- Ear Problems
- Medicines and Driving
- Red Eyes
- Cold and Flu
- Sinus Problems

## Contact

A **doctor** (listed under 'medical practitioners' in the yellow pages of the phone book).

A **Self Care pharmacist**. To find: (02) 6283 4777

In case of poisoning, phone the **Poisons Information Centre** on 131 126 from anywhere in Australia.

Pharmacists are medicines experts.

Ask your pharmacist for advice when choosing a medicine.

Your **Self Care** Pharmacist

**DAVID S. NOLTE PHARMACY 3049L**  
701 RATHDOWNE ST., NTH CARLTON 9349 1522

Sponsored by



*Pharmacy Self Care has a strong commitment to providing current and reliable health information. The information in this card was current at time of printing.*

