

Heathgate Medical Practice Self-care leaflet – Hay fever

This range of leaflets created by our clinical team provide useful information on a range of conditions that can in most cases be managed by patients at home. Where symptoms persist after a period of self-care or after advice from the local pharmacist, you should consider calling the surgery.

What is hay fever?

Allergies are an inflammatory response to a range of triggers from substances we inhale, eat or come into contact with. Hay fever is a common allergy to pollen which occurs from the late spring to early autumn.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include a runny nose and eyes, itch eyes, a sore throat, blotchy rashes and sometimes a cough or a wheeze.

How can I manage the condition?

Hay fever can be very frustrating and instructive to our daily activities. There are a number of things that can be done to minimise the effects:

- Avoid the trigger. This may sound simple and can be hard to achieve sometimes but minimising exposure will of course help. During periods of high pollen close windows and try drying washing indoors to avoid pollen getting into your clothes.
- Washing your face and hands regularly with water will wash away pollen.
- Applying Vaseline to the nostrils will also help as the pollen will get caught on the Vaseline before it enters the nose and throat.
- Take a regular antihistamine. These are readily available from local pharmacies and supermarkets and are inexpensive. If you are concerned about drowsiness as a side effect, then you should read the information on the packaging or the information leaflet and discuss your circumstances with a pharmacist.
- As well as the antihistamine tablets, you could also add in other treatments such as eye drops and nasal sprays. Again, they can be purchased from a local pharmacist under advice from the pharmacist.

When should you contact a healthcare professional?

We would not expect patients to seek advice from a clinician for simple hay fever when this can be managed using over the counter remedies. When the remedies purchased from the pharmacy have no or little effect and the symptoms are causing real distress to regular activities, a routine appointment should be made.

The clinician may consider a stronger medication which is only available via a prescription. We do not routinely provide injections to manage the symptoms of hay fever.

Should you suffer a reaction, which causes your breathing to become difficult or your tongue or throat becomes swollen, urgent medical attention should be sought via 999 or the Accident and Emergency department at the hospital.

Further advice on allergies and hay fever is available at www.nhs.uk