

INFORMATION ON HAYFEVER

The following information has been prepared by our Clinical Pharmacist within the practice which you may find useful.

Hayfever is a common allergic condition that affects up to one in five people.

Hayfever is caused by the body reacting to pollen from grasses, flowers, trees and/or weeds as if it is 'harmful' to the body. The body reacts by producing histamine. This causes the unpleasant symptoms we know as hayfever.

Symptoms can include some or all the following:

- Itchy eyes/throat
- Sneezing, blocked/runny nose.
- Watering, red eyes
- Shortness of breath
- Tiredness
- The sensation of mucus running down the back of the throat, called post-nasal drip

The severity of symptoms can vary, some people need medication to manage their symptoms and others can manage their condition by avoiding triggers. If treatment is needed, a wide range of medications can be purchased from community pharmacies and supermarkets.

In 2018 following a national consultation and publication of NHS England guidance the following treatments are no longer available for GPs to prescribe to treat hay fever:

- Antihistamine tablets and liquids (including cetirizine, loratadine, acrivastine, chlorphenamine, fexofenadine 120mg)
- Steroid nasal sprays (including beclometasone, budesonide and fluticasone)
- Sodium cromoglicate eye drops and Otrivine Antistin eye drops

These medications are usually cheaper than a prescription and can be purchased without needing to see a GP.

If your hayfever symptoms are not controlled after 2-4 weeks, you may need to try a different treatment or need to add in another treatment. Some trial and error may be required to find the best combination of tablet/nasal spray and eye drop for you.