



Allergic Rhinitis

Patient information leaflet



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Common Ailments Service

Only use this leaflet if your pharmacist has advised you about your or your child's condition.

You may notice allergic rhinitis symptoms soon after the lining of your nose is irritated by something that you have become allergic to (an allergen). In seasonal allergic rhinitis (hay fever), the allergen is usually pollen from grass or trees.

A few minutes after coming into contact with the allergen, you may:

- sneeze
- have an itchy nose
- have a runny or blocked nose
- have itchy, red and watery eyes
- cough
- feel itchy on the roof of your mouth

You may have these symptoms:

- at the same time each year, as in people with hay fever
- most of the time, as in people who are allergic to dust mites or animals such as dogs or cats
- mostly at work, as in people who are allergic to, and work, with flour



Treatment and Prevention

Some people find that avoiding the things that trigger the allergy (the allergens) is enough, and there is no need for treatment.

For example, to avoid contact with pollen:

- wear wraparound sunglasses
- dust with a damp cloth and vacuum with a HEPA filter
- avoid drying clothes outside when the pollen count is high
- avoid walking in open grassy areas in the early morning and early evening
- keep car and building windows closed

To avoid contact with house dust mites:

- use synthetic pillows and acrylic duvets
- wash bedding and furry toys every week at 60°C or above

To avoid allergens from pets:

- keep pets out of the bedrooms
- wash your pet's bedding regularly and clean the furniture they have been on
- groom your pets outside and wash them every 2 weeks or more often

There are more suggestions and tips on the Allergy UK site:

<https://www.allergyuk.org/living-with-an-allergy/at-home/>



Treatment and Prevention

Medicines that can help

These medicines are not suitable for everyone. Make sure you have asked your pharmacist for advice about what treatment is best for you or your child.

Using a **salt water solution** to rinse out the inside of your nose could help to clear your nose and make it less likely that you will need other medicines.

You can buy a salt water solution from your local pharmacy or you can make your own at home. Follow the instructions below.

1. Boil a pint of water, then leave it to cool.
2. Mix 1 teaspoon of salt and 1 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda into the water.
3. Wash your hands.
4. Stand over a sink, cup the palm of 1 hand and pour a small amount of the solution into it.
5. Sniff the water into 1 nostril at a time. Breathe through your mouth and allow the water to pour back into the sink. Try not to let the water go down the back of your throat.
6. Repeat the first 5 steps up to 3 times a day (making a new solution each time) until your nose feels more comfortable.

Your pharmacist may suggest using **azelastine** (an antihistamine) nasal spray if you are mainly treating sneezing or a runny nose. It should work quickly.

The antihistamines **loratadine** and **cetirizine** come as tablets and liquids. They can also help with itchy, red, watery eyes.

If these antihistamines do not fully control your symptoms your pharmacist may suggest a steroid nasal spray containing **mometasone** or **fluticasone**. The steroid spray should start to work 6 to 8 hours after the first dose, but may take up to 2 weeks to work well.

Sodium cromoglicate drops can help with itchy, red, watery eyes. Avoid wearing soft contact lenses when you use them.

Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine.

If you are concerned about any side effects from a treatment, report it to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You can also report side effects on the Yellow Card [app](#) or [website](#).



When to Get Help

Contact your GP or call 111 if you:

- have used the treatment your pharmacist advised but it is not working
- have a high temperature or the area around your eyes or nose feels very tender
- feel breathless
- keep having nosebleeds or pain in your nose
- are not sure what is causing your symptoms
- have asthma and it's getting worse
- cannot sleep or go about your everyday life as well as usual

If you are worried that your or your child's condition is not getting better, or is getting worse, talk to your GP.



More information

For more information on allergic rhinitis, hay fever, or a medicine, talk to your pharmacist or look at the following websites:

Allergic rhinitis

NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/allergic-rhinitis/>

Hay fever

NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever/>

Allergy UK: <https://www.allergyuk.org/types-of-allergies/hayfever/>

Medicines A-Z: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/>

Information from the above resources is included in this leaflet.



Mae'r daflen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This leaflet is also available in Welsh.

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