

Hay Fever guide

As we enter May, the grass pollen hay fever season begins and currently tree pollens have been the cause of your symptoms (see pollen calendar). The most common hay fever symptoms are runny, itchy and blocked nose, but also itchy, red eyes.

Things you can do to help:

1. When you come inside in the evening have a shower to wash off the pollen and change your clothes.
2. Close your windows as pollen levels are greatest at dusk & dawn.
3. Try to avoid leaving washing outside to dry (they will collect pollen).
4. Use a barrier cream like Vaseline in your nostrils to stop some of the pollens entering.
5. Use wraparound sunglasses.

There are lots of safe medicines that can help. Ideally start them 2 weeks before your hay fever season starts. They work well together (i.e combining an oral antihistamine with a nasal steroid spray).

Antihistamines: Stick to the non-sedating antihistamines (Cetirizine, Loratidine and Fexofenadine). They are very good for runny, itchy symptoms but not so good for blocked nose symptoms. In children, I often recommend giving one dose in the morning and another in the evening (so double the dose-especially if symptoms are bad). Please avoid using sedating antihistamines such as Chlorpheniramine (Piriton).

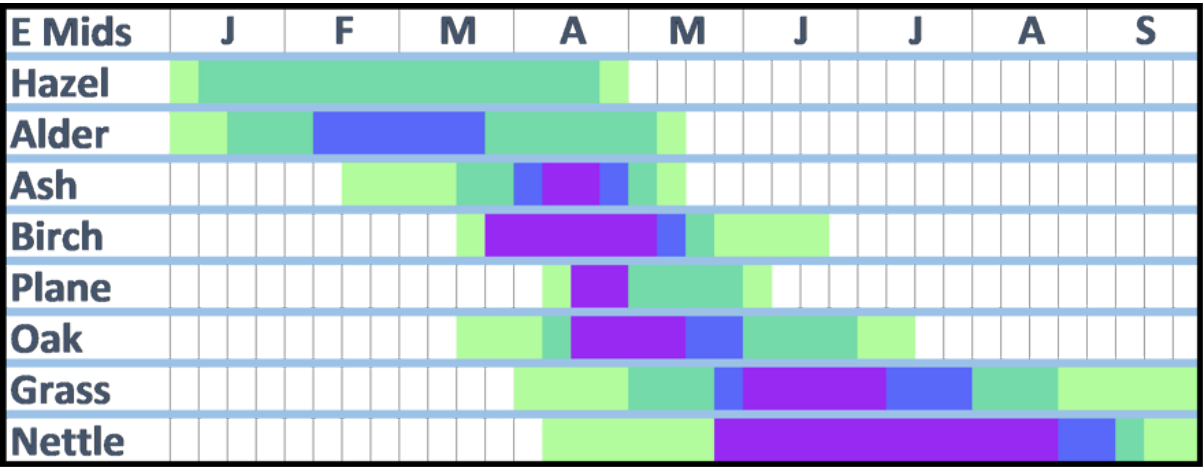
Nasal Sprays: Nasal steroid sprays are very good for itchy, runny and blocked nose symptoms and are very safe. Hardly any gets absorbed by the body and they just work locally to help symptoms. In children I recommend Fluticasone or Mometasone nasal sprays as very little is absorbed by the body and they work locally. Use them with the correct technique - visit: itchysneezywheezy.co.uk. They can be bought over the counter and prescribed by GPs in younger children. If you don't like sprays, try Avamys from your GP which sprays more of a mist and often very well tolerated in children.

Eye drops: Sodium Chromoglycate eye drops do help. If not, you could ask your GP to prescribe Olapatidine eye drops.

If your symptoms are still a problem despite this, then pollen desensitisation is an option in specialist clinics. Avoid steroid (Kenalog) injections due to safety concerns and they are not recommended. You are exposed to all the potential side effects of steroids.

Have a great summer!

University of Worcester pollen calendar for East Midlands



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