

HAYFEVER

At least one in five people suffer hayfever – the hayfever season has already started and this year is tipped to be a bad one.

What is Hayfever?

- Hayfever is an allergic reaction commonly triggered by grass seed, pollen, mould or dust mites.

What are the Symptoms of Hayfever?

- Hayfever usually causes sneezing, itchy eyes and nasal congestion or a runny nose. The nasal congestion may cause headaches which can be quite severe.
- The nasal discharge is usually clear and copious however, it may turn yellow and sticky. This does not necessarily mean you have an infection – it may just be your immune system doing its job.
- Some people may get a bleeding nose particularly if they have been blowing it a lot. This isn't anything to worry about unless it bleeds a lot.

What Can be Done to Ease Symptoms at Home?

- Make sure your house is clean of any allergens – remember to clean the top of doorways, fan blades, screens and pet's bedding. Wipe these areas down regularly so nothing can accumulate!
- It's important to minimise exposure to allergens: use a disposable face mask when mowing the lawn, shower after being outside to reduce pollen or grass seed on skin and stay inside on windy days and keep doors and windows shut.
- To ease nasal congestion try an old style inhalations – over a bowl with a towel over the head - using either just steam or eucalyptus oil. While at work, you can do it with just a mug or boiling water cupping your hands around the lip and breathing the steam.
- If you can't do an inhalation, try mixing a little eucalyptus oil with some light oil such as jojoba and spreading it where you can smell it (such as under your nose) or on a handkerchief. There are also some essential oil preparations specifically aimed at this!
- To ease runny nose try pressing points either side of nostrils. The points will be tender so press gently!
- To ease itchy eyes: wash or splash water around your eyes or wash the eyes in a saline eye bath.
- Some foods can aggravate hayfever especially foods can increase phlegm: fried or greasy food or excessive dairy. Some people say that milk in particular causes more phlegm.
- Conversely, some foods may help move nasal congestion especially hot/spicy food. These should only be eaten in moderation as too much can make the hayfever worse!

What Other Treatment that can Help?

- Facial massage can help to move nasal congestion – but make sure you do it gently as the face bruises easily.
- Acupuncture has some great treatments for helping to relieve the symptoms of hayfever.
- There are some herbal formulae for hayfever especially to relieve congestion. It is always advisable to consult a professional rather than buy it over the counter or over the internet as some formulae may interfere with medication.
- Hayfever can impair the immune system so a zinc supplement is a great way to support it.

When Should You See a Doctor

- Hayfever will usually go away by itself but if the symptoms are severe or you develop new symptoms such as shortness of breath it's best to see a doctor.