

## HAYFEVER - Allergic Conjunctivitis



### What is Hayfever/Allergic Conjunctivitis?

Hayfever Eyes means that your eyes are sensitive to pollen, which can cause them to become red and bloodshot, itchy puffy, and to water excessively. The medical term for this is seasonal allergic conjunctivitis. This condition arises due to an allergic reaction of

the eyes to pollen and other allergens (eg. Cats, less often dogs, House dust mite etc..)



When pollen or the allergen comes into contact with the eye, this can cause inflammation of the conjunctiva - the delicate membrane that covers the eyeball and the inner surface of the eyelids. This allergic reaction is your body's natural immune response to foreign particles. However, your eyes are hypersensitive to pollen/allergens so the response is exaggerated, causing the release of histamine in the eyes. The release of histamine can in turn cause your eyes to become red, bloodshot, itchy, watery, and a white, stringy mucus may be present in the eyes. The eyelids may also become red and puffy.

**How Many people suffer from Hayfever** - An estimated 15% of the population suffer from Hayfever - 80% of sufferers are aged between 15 - 35 years. Hayfever Eyes is generally first experienced during the early teens, but symptoms tend to lessen with age as sufferers 'grow out of' the condition. Most sufferers grow out of the condition by the age of 45.

**Can HAYFEVER EYES be cured ?** - No, but it can be treated.

The symptoms of HAYFEVER eyes can be treated with a variety of eye drops. Some of these can now be purchased more cheaply (if you pay for your prescriptions) from a pharmacy without a prescription.

**Rapitol** My favourite but no longer made as from 2018. May occur as Nedocredmil in the future.



**Opticrom** Sodium Cromoglycate 2% This drug has been used for many years very successfully in treating allergic conditions such as Asthma as well as for the eyes. Its great advantage is that you can buy this yourself over the counter at Chemists without a prescription.

**Catacrom** Single dose Na Cromoglycate made in individual vials from Moorfields Eye Hospital Pharmacy. Very useful as preservative free eye drops and single units, thus ideal for intermittent use where a bottle of drops will expire after one month.

**Opatanol** Olopatadine is a new mast stabilising drug and antihistamine which does not sting and is licensed for children over 3 years old.

**Zaditen** Ketotifen is a new eye drop.

**Alomide** Lodoxamide 0.1% is alternative to Opticrom - Popular with External disease consultants.

**Livostin** Levocabastine is alternative to Opticrom

**Otrivine-Antistin and Optrex** I rarely recommend as they treat the effects rather than the cause and repeated use can cause rebound hyperaemia (redness) of the eyes. However some people do find them useful.

**Acular** **Ketorolac Trometamol 0.5%** is a new drug that is proving popular in those cases that do not respond to other medications. It acts like a steroid drop

but is a Non-Steroidal anti-inflammatory drug like Aspirin.

**Steroid Eye Drops** eg. Predsol or Dexamethasone, are the strongest drugs we have available for treating these conditions and should be administered ONLY under a consultants directions.

If used on a longer term basis, FML (Fluorometholone 0.1% Allergan) is to be preferred as this stays on the outside of the eye and the risks of cataract and glaucoma associated with Predsol or Maxidex are far less.

Pollen from trees, grasses, moulds flowers is present from May September, peaking between June July, and during the mid-morning early evening.

To help limit your exposure to pollen and lessen the symptoms of Hayfever eyes:

☞ Check daily pollen counts and accordingly

☞ Wear sunglasses to shield you eyes from pollen

☞ Avoid wide open grassy space e.g. parks, gardens or fields

☞ Keep air vents and windows closed in the house, train or c;

☞ After a period outside, wash hair and body, and change clothing to remove pollen

☞ Do not rub your eyes as this can cause more histamine to be released resulting in increased redness and itching of the eye'

☞ Cool compresses can also help.

**For General Hayfever symptoms** (Nasal discharge and Eye symptoms) an oral antihistamine is recommended. My current choice is:

**Clarityn** (Schering-Plough) 10mg (one tablet daily) also available in a syrup for children.

Tablets and syrup are available without prescription in small quantity packs from Pharmacists. (Clarityn Allergy); another brand on sale to the public is Boots Hayfever Relief.

As with all antihistamines drowsiness is possible and if this occurs you should avoid driving or operating heavy machinery. However Clarityn, Terfenadine have much lower sedative effect than the traditional Piriton.

**NeoClarityn** is a new antihistamine that is based on Clarityn but is much more effective and may be given to children from the age of 12. This is only available on prescription.

**Zirtec** is a new antihistamine available as a liquid for children, that is proving popular.

**Chlorphenamine** is another good antihistamine.

For Nasal Symptoms:

Ordinary Nasal Decongestants used for Colds help

If severe then contact your General Practitioner/ENT specialists for steroid based nasal sprays such

as : **Flixonase** (Fluticasone Propionate) a once a day preparation.

### **Skin testing for allergies at The Clementine Churchill Hospital**

Mrs Alison Summerfield  
Skin Testing  
Nurse Specialist The Clementine Churchill Hospital  
Sudbury Hill Harrow, Middlesex HA1 3RX

### **The London Allergy Clinic**

For consideration to overall management and desensitization to allergens then consider contacting the London Allergy clinic that specialize in this.

66 New Cavendish Street , London W1  
Tel: 020 7637 9711

### **Dry eyes and Allergy - Pollution**

It is being increasingly appreciated that people who suffer the gritty dry eyes also suffer more with itchy allergic eyes. This is because the barrier function of the tears has gone and thus the pollen etc. is not washed away. Thus the eyes become itchy more readily.

To treat this one use artificial tears to build up the barrier effect eg. with Celluvisc (Allergan Carmellose 1% Preservative Free) and also to use an Allergy eye drop like Rapitil (Nedocromil 2% eye drops). In addition to the usual treatment for allergy of trying to identify the adjents, keeping windows closed. Cool face compresses can help also.

Should you have any further questions Please do not hesitate to ask your Doctor or phone our Secretary.

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