

Hay Fever

(Mild to Moderate Seasonal Rhinitis)

Wiltshire CCG does not support prescribing preparations for mild to moderate seasonal hay fever on the NHS. A wide range of medications can be purchased from pharmacies, supermarkets and high street retailers.

Background

- In line with national guidance on Over the Counter preparations from NHS Englandⁱ, hay fever is a self-limiting condition which for the majority of patients is suitable for self-care
- Tree pollen is released between March and September and affects 25% of sufferers; grass pollen, which affects 90% of sufferers, is released from May to late July; and fungal spores are released until September.
- Oral antihistamines, intranasal corticosteroids and antihistamine eye drops are the usual treatment options for hay fever. All of these products are available to purchase over-the-counter at the same medicinal strength as prescription only products.

Prescribing Guidance

- Advice to ALL patients - **Think Pharmacy First**
- For more information visit <http://www.wiltshireccg.nhs.uk/over-the-counter>
- First line treatments for mild to moderate seasonal hay fever should be purchased over the counter for all patients unless specifically excluded on OTC product licenseⁱⁱ
- An NHS prescription must not routinely be issued for products available over the counter

If patient finds no relief from OTC products, refer to Allergic Rhinitis treatment pathway <https://prescribing.wiltshireccg.nhs.uk/?wpdmdl=1805>

The CCG considers the use of oral immunotherapy **Grazax** as a low priority for commissioning and does not recommend prescribing this product

Specific Considerations - Paediatrics

- Consider whether a liquid antihistamine is still indicated (is the child old enough to manage a tablet formulation?)
- If a liquid is required, cetirizine 5mg/5ml oral solution is a cost effective choice
- Beclomethasone 50mcg/dose aqueous nasal spray is suitable from 6 years of age if a steroid nasal spray is required (must be prescribed as not licensed under 18s for sale)

Pregnancy /Breastfeeding;

- Loratadine can be taken (use lowest dose for shortest duration)
- Nasal douching with normal saline can be used alternatively or in addition

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How can triggers be avoided? - Advice to all patients;

- ✓ Keep house and car windows closed, especially when pollen count is high (7am to 9am and 5pm to 7pm)
- ✓ Avoid large grassy areas, woodland, cutting the grass, pollutants and car fumes
- ✓ Wear wrap-around sunglasses
- ✓ When you get in from outside wash your hands, face, hair, rinse your eyes and change your clothes
- ✓ If possible stay indoors when the pollen count is high
- ✓ Use petroleum jelly (Vaseline) inside your nose to block inhalation of pollen
- ✓ Don't dry wash outside to avoid pollen sticking to your clothes
- ✓ Consider buying a pollen filter for the air vents in the car

Medication available - patients should ask their local pharmacist for advice

		Generic Drug Name	Usual Dose	Formulary/ advice	Other instructions
TABLETS		Cetirizine 10mg	1 daily	First line	Available OTC All available in tablet and liquid form for children
		Loratadine 10mg	1 daily	First line	
		Chlorphenamine 4mg	1 every 4-6 hrs, max 24mg/day Can cause drowsiness	First line	
		Acrivastine 8mg	1 up to 3 times a day	Non-formulary	Available OTC
		Fexofenadine 120mg (180mg for dermatology only)	1 daily	Second line	Prescription only
NASAL SPRAYS	STERIOD	Beclometasone Aqueous 50mcg (Beconase)	2 sprays twice daily and reduce when controlled (over 6 years)	First line	Available to buy OTC for pts over 18 yrs ONLY Prescribe 200 dose
		Budesonide 64mcg (Rhinocort)	2 sprays daily or 1 spray twice daily. When controlled reduce to 1 spray od. Max duration 3/12	Second-line	Available OTC Not licensed for children under the age of 12 yrs
		Fluticasone propionate 50mcg (Pirinase)	Two sprays into each nostril once a day	Second line	Available to buy OTC for pts over 18 yrs. ONLY (Avamys is prescription only and offers no extra benefits over OTC sprays)
		Mometasone 50mcg (Clarinaze,Rhinolast)	1-2 sprays into each nostril once a day	Second line	
		Azelastine 140mcg	1 spray twice daily	Second line	Prescription only
		Avamys 27.5mcg	Use once daily	Second line	Prescription only
EYE DROPS		Sodium Cromoglicate 2%	1 drop into each eye up to four times per day	First line	Available OTC

Wiltshire CCG Cost Impact

- NHS Wiltshire spent **£153,000** on 77,726 prescription items for hay fever during 2017-18
- It should be noted that these medications are also used for perennial conditions such as urticaria and perennial rhinitis as well as other allergies so it is not possible to determine the spend on hay fever

References

ⁱ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines/over-the-counter-items-which-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed/>

ⁱⁱ <https://cks.nice.org.uk/allergic-rhinitis>

With thanks to Telford CCG : <https://www.telfordccg.nhs.uk/your-health/medicines-management/prescribing-guidelines/respiratory/4477-management-of-hayfever-may-2018/file>