

Self Care Briefing for Clinicians: Mild to Moderate Hay Fever

Summary

Mild to moderate hay fever and other allergic symptoms can be managed by avoiding triggers or taking medications. If treatment is needed, a wide range of medication can be purchased from community pharmacies and supermarkets. These medications are usually less expensive than a prescription and can be purchased without seeing a GP.

Recommendations for clinicians

- Provide the patient with a 'non-prescription' sheet or a patient information leaflet to promote education about self-limiting conditions suitable for self care when appropriate. See: [NHS.uk:Hay fever](https://www.nhs.uk/hay-fever)
- Advise patients of safe and effective self care measures:
 - Consult a pharmacist for advice as to which treatment is most suitable.
 - Wear wraparound sunglasses to stop pollen getting into your eyes and use petroleum jelly around the nostrils to trap pollen.
 - Shower and change your clothes after you have been outside to wash off pollen.
 - Stay indoors and keep windows and doors shut as much as possible.
 - Vacuum regularly and dust with a damp cloth. Buy a pollen filter for the air vents in your car and a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter.
- Patients should seek medical attention if:
 - Experiencing wheezing, breathlessness or tightness in their chest.
 - Pregnant or breastfeeding.
 - Hay fever symptoms are not relieved by over-the-counter treatment in combination with measures to reduce exposure to pollen.
 - The pattern of symptoms seems unusual or diagnosis is uncertain.
 - An over-the-counter corticosteroid nasal spray has been used for longer than 3 months.

Examples of over-the-counter products available to buy

Please advise patients that suggested prices are, a guide, correct at the time of writing and are subject to change.

- Loratadine: (£0.99-£5.50 for 14 tablets). Not suitable for children under 2 years old. Not available over-the-counter in pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Cetirizine: (£0.99-£5.50 for 14 tablets). Not suitable for children under 2 years old. Not available over-the-counter in pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Sodium cromoglicate 2% eye drops: (£5.00-£6.50 for 10ml). Discard 28 days after opening.

- Beclomethasone: (£4.50-£6.00 for 100 metered dose spray). Not for patients under the age of 18. Not available over-the-counter in pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Fluticasone: (£6.60-£8.60 for 50-60 metered dose spray). Not suitable for patients under the age of 18. Not available over-the-counter in pregnancy and breastfeeding or if planning to become pregnant.

Further information

- [Selfcare forum](#)
- [NHS.uk](#)
- [Patient UK](#)

Document History

Version: V 1.1

Author: **SWL DROP list working group**

Approved by: Integrated medicines committee (IMOC)

Approval date: **November 2021**

Review Date: 2 years from approval date or sooner where appropriate.