

## **Top Tips for Hay Fever Control**

### **Stay one step ahead of your symptoms:**

Start your FULL treatment about **2 weeks before** your usual hay fever season.

The first few days of hayfever (HF) is a histamine reaction. After that inflammation takes over, especially in the nose. Regular steroid nose spray use, before you get a blocked runny nose, is the best way of controlling HF symptoms throughout your season. Most HF eye drops help block histamine and work best used regularly before your eyes get bad.

### **Avoid your allergen:**

Easier said than done, but wearing sunglasses when out, using over the counter dry eye drops, a smear of Vaseline inside both nostrils, closing your windows in the evening, keeping car windows shut. These all act as physical barriers to pollens. Read more advice on Allergy UK website.

### **Use two or three way defense: EYE DROPS AND NOSE SPRAY +/- tablets.**

If you are anything other than a very mild infrequent HF sufferer, please treat your eyes and nose. That means regular eye drops and nose spray EVERY DAY. Tablets are not great for everyday use. If you can, just keep them for occasional use or short courses and carry on with your drops and sprays. (Popping a tablet is easy, but it's the drops and sprays that do the best work for you).

### **A word about nose spray technique:**

To get the spray to the important bits up your nose and avoid it dripping down your throat: Bend your head forwards to look at the floor. Put the nozzle up your LEFT nostril and aim it outwards towards your LEFT ear. (Right nostril aim out towards your RIGHT ear). NO SNIFFING! When you stand up straight again, just wipe any nose dribbles with tissue.

### **Over the counter best buys:**

Any HF nose spray containing a steroid: **Beclometasone or Fucicasone**

Eye drops: containing **Sodium Cromoglicate, or Antazoline/Xylometolazone ( Otrivine- Antistin)**

Hayfever Tablets: any containing **Cetirizine or Loratadine**.

You can get expert advice from your local chemist about what might suit you best and other medications not listed above. If you are confident what to get, remember you can get cheap, effective, generic preparations from supermarkets.

If you are still suffering badly after following the above advice, please review your home self-management plan and look at <https://www.allergyuk.org> for further tips.

Most hay fever preparations are considered **home remedies** by NHS England and you are expected to source them yourselves without a prescription. In case of severe active disease, not adequately controlled with usual measures, please book a telephone review with your chemist or primary care service. Children and people with kidney or liver disease **may** require a script; ask your chemist first please.

Last word: If you also have severe allergies, such as anaphylaxis to nuts or asthma, good hayfever control **reduces your 'allergic load'** and helps to reduce the risk of serious allergic reactions and asthma attacks happening. More info available on [allergyuk.org](https://www.allergyuk.org)

By Dr Debra Spraggins, GP and hayfever sufferer, for Langdon Hills Medical Centre. March 2021