



Allergy in the air

Spring is notorious for allergic reactions such as hay fever because pollen levels are at their highest. Our eyes may react to allergies by becoming red, swollen, watery or itchy.

Allergens are substances that cause allergic reactions and include pollens, dust, animal hair and mould spores. Hay fever—also known as allergic rhinitis or seasonal allergic conjunctivitis—describes the itchy eyes, nose and mouth, sneezing and runny, blocked nose that occur when grass pollen is blown around.

If you cannot prevent hay fever by avoiding the cause of the allergy, it can be treated with over the counter or prescription medication.

Identifying and minimising contact with your allergic triggers is an essential component of allergy management but dust and Spring-time pollen are often hard to avoid. Some people may experience allergy symptoms all year round. This is called perennial allergic conjunctivitis and the treatment is the same as for hay fever in the Spring.

Although drugs do not cure allergies, there are medicines available that can relieve the symptoms of allergic hay fever. It is important to try to not rub itchy eyes as it may result in eye infection.

You can ask your optometrist for help to relieve itchy, watery eyes. They may prescribe or recommend medicated eye-drops containing soothing lubricants or antihistamines to reduce inflammation with regular use.