**Please do not contact the GP if you have mild to moderate symptoms of hay fever.**

Hay fever can be a miserable experience in the summer: Itchy eyes, runny and blocked noses, tickly throats and sneezes.

However, hay fever rarely causes serious problems for most people and  [NHS England Guidance](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/otc-guidance-for-ccgs.pdf) advises that in most cases people should treat their hay fever symptoms using over the counter medicines available from local supermarkets, other stores, online retailers or your local pharmacy.

By purchasing these items, you will be freeing up GP practice team appointments for people with urgent needs and help the NHS save money on unnecessary prescription costs.

A box of 30 antihistamine tablets can cost as little as £2, especially if you ask for non-branded products. A prescription for the same medication costs the NHS considerably more. Last year NHS Herefordshire & Worcestershire spent over £1 million on medicines that can be used to treat hay fever.

Your local pharmacist can advise you further on how to control your hay fever symptoms. You can even ask for a private consultation about your symptoms with a pharmacist, without an appointment, if you wish**. F**urther useful information can be found at [NHS Choices](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever/) and [NHS Herefordshire & Worcestershire](https://herefordshireandworcestershire.icb.nhs.uk/)

**You should only need to contact your GP practice team if:**

* If you are experiencing wheezing, breathlessness or tightness in the chest.
* If you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
* If your symptoms are not relieved by over the counter treatments in combination with measures to reduce your exposure to pollen
* Your **pharmacist** can advise you if you need to speak to your GP about your hay fever symptoms.