



Health Matters Assistance Programme



Hay Fever

Hay fever is a form of allergic rhinitis caused by pollen or spores. Allergic rhinitis is a condition where an allergen (something that causes an allergic reaction) makes the inside of your nose inflamed (swollen). Hay fever affects the nose, sinuses (small air-filled cavities behind your cheekbones and forehead), throat and eyes. This causes sneezing, a runny nose, congestion, and itchy eyes.

The pollens that are spread by the wind are usually the main cause of such seasonal allergies. When pollen is present in the air, it can land in a person's eyes, nose, lungs and on the skin thereby setting up an allergic reaction.

Hay fever is a common condition that affects around a fifth of people in the UK. Hay fever is more likely if there is a family history of allergies, particularly asthma or eczema.

Hay fever cannot be cured completely and avoiding pollens is virtually impossible, however there are a number of treatments available to relieve the symptoms. These include antihistamine tablets, nasal (nose) sprays and eye drops. Some can only be prescribed by a GP, but many are available over-the-counter in pharmacies. For persistent hay fever, a treatment known as immunotherapy can be used to gradually increase a person's exposure to the allergen while monitoring their response. This can be effective at reducing the severity of allergic reaction, but is not suitable for everyone. For more information in this regard please consult your GP.

You will also find a considerable support section on health related topics on the HMAP Secure Website: www.hmap-online.co.uk

If you wish to discuss in confidence health related concerns or indeed any other concern, you can do so by telephoning the:

Health Matters Assistance Programme

support when you need it
freephone: 0800 083 7545

Just some of the issues covered...

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Illness, Health & Wellbeing

Childcare & Parenting

Eldercare

Retirement

Traumatic Incidents