

Hay Fever Season Arrives: Pharmacists issue warning about Hay Fever



With temperatures due to increase over the next number of days and the pollen count predicted to be high pharmacists have warned hay fever sufferers to take preventative steps to deal with their condition.

Hay fever is a common condition that affects many people in Ireland, with symptoms ranging from itchy eyes and throat to a runny nose, sneezing, coughing and headaches. It is an allergic pollen, usually when it comes into contact with your mouth, nose, eyes and throat.

Tree, grass and weed pollen can all cause hay fever. While the pollen from grass typically peaks in July, the hay fever season in Ireland typically starts in April and can last until September meaning that sufferers are now beginning to feel increasing symptoms.

There is currently no cure for hay fever but there are things you can do. **Kathy Maher, IPU** recommends 7 top tips for sufferers of hay fever to help combat their symptoms:

1. Keep windows and doors closed as much as possible, especially at night.
2. Apply Vaseline around your nostrils to trap pollen and stop it being inhaled.
3. Wear wraparound sunglasses to prevent pollen entering the eyes.
4. Do not mow grass and avoid working in the garden.
5. Wash your hair, hands and face when you come back indoors and change clothes to remove any pollen.
6. Monitor the pollen tracker and stay indoors when the pollen count is high, which is usually in the morning and evening.
7. Use a pollen filter in your car and a HEPA filter in your vacuum cleaner.

The IPU also advises that people with fever should speak to their pharmacist about their symptoms and to receive advice on treatments that may help. Treatments such as antihistamine drops, tablets or nasal sprays are available directly from the pharmacist.

Almost 80% of asthma patients suffer from hay fever and hay fever can trigger an asthma attack. Asthma patients should ensure they have an up-to-date prescription for their inhaler(s), that they are using them as prescribed and where relevant that they carry their reliever inhaler with them at all times. They should also ensure their hay fever symptoms are well managed and their pharmacist can help with this.

Speaking about the supports that community pharmacy can provide for sufferers of hay fever, Kathy Maher spokesperson for the IPU said, "With the arrival of warmer weather, hay fever can create a serious discomfort for people. There is no one fix that will work for everyone and so it is important to talk to your pharmacist about the best way to manage your symptoms. Pharmacies across the country are well equipped to provide support to those suffering from hay fever and we urge everyone, and in particular those who suffer from severe hay fever, to speak to their local pharmacy team for advice, guidance and access to treatments."