

1/91 Bridge Street,
Ahuriri
Ph. (06) 835 7948
Fax. (06) 835 7930
ahuriri.pharmacy@hdl.net.nz
www.ahuriripharmacy.co.nz



Practical tips to beat that horrible hayfever

If you are sitting reading this with a box of tissues on hand you are not alone. New Zealand has one of the highest rates of hayfever in the world, with about 20 per cent of the population suffering from the ailment.

Hayfever is caused by allergens such as pollens entering the nose, throat or eyes. The allergens activate mast cells which release substances including histamine and cause sneezing, a runny and itchy nose, and watery and itchy eyes.

But the good news is there are a variety of treatments available to help address those annoying symptoms.

Antihistamine medicines come in either tablet or liquid form and prevent the release of histamine. The new versions are non-drowsy and many last up to 24 hours. Some are now subsidized by the Government so can be more economical to get on prescription.

Many people find rotating antihistamines can maximize their effectiveness. It also helps to start the treatment before you are exposed to the allergens, either at the start of the season or at night so it is in the body for the morning. Decongestant tablets or nasal sprays can help clear the nose, while eye drops can be used for watery and itchy eyes. Corticosteroid nasal sprays can help as a preventative for hayfever as they work on all the substances responsible for hayfever, although they can take up to a week to take effect.

An interesting treatment available through your doctor is immunotherapy. That involves injecting tiny amounts of allergens into your body in an effort to strengthen the immune system.

Allergy sufferers can take some simple steps to ease discomfort. First, try and find out what you are allergic to and avoid it. It may be helpful to keep a diary of allergy symptoms and possible allergens each day. Most pollen is in the air early in the morning so try to minimize your activity between 5am-10am, and if you are out and about wear close-fitting sunglasses to prevent pollen getting in your eyes. Keeping the windows shut in your house and car may help hayfever symptoms by reducing the number of allergens in the environment. Always use a damp cloth to wipe over surfaces when dusting, and don't hang washing outside to dry as pollens and moulds can collect in it. When gardening select low pollen-producing garden plants (usually native species) and wear a mask when mowing the lawn – it really does make a difference!

Don't forget always consult a health-care professional before beginning any hayfever treatment.