



Hay Fever Treatment Update – OTC

Mild to moderate hay fever / seasonal rhinitis is listed by NHS England as a condition for which over the counter (OTC) medicines **should not be routinely prescribed** in primary care. NHS England has not identified any routine exceptions. [NHS England » Guidance on conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care](#)

Most people with mild to moderate symptoms can relieve their symptoms with OTC treatments recommended by a pharmacist and self-care measures to avoid exposure to allergens.

There is a wide range of OTC treatments available from pharmacies, supermarkets, and other retail outlets. Generic or “own label” versions are usually the most cost-effective. There are some restrictions to OTC sale and so an NHS prescription may be needed in some circumstances.

Fexofenadine 120mg was re-classified from POM to GSL a few years ago and OTC products are available to purchase. Fexofenadine 180mg does not have a licence for hay fever.

The table below lists some of the common OTC hay fever medications available. There are also many non-drug preparations on the market eg allergen barrier nasal sprays, nasal rinses etc.

	Medication	OTC restrictions – see SPC for full details	Common brands (list is not exhaustive)	Class	Price
NASAL SPRAYS	Beclomethasone 50mcg/dose nasal spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children under 18 years Pregnancy, breastfeeding 	Beconase Hayfever Relief for Adults® 0.05%® Beconase Hayfever®	GSL/P depending on pack sizes	From £4.49 for 100 sprays
	Fluticasone propionate 50mcg/dose nasal spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children under 18 years Pregnancy, breastfeeding Taking medication for HIV 	Pirinase Hayfever Relief for Adults 0.05% Nasal Spray® Pirinase Allergy 0.05% Nasal Spray®	GSL/P	RRP £9.50 for 60 sprays
	Budesonide 64 mcg/dose nasal spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children under 18 years Pregnancy, breastfeeding 	Benacort Hayfever Relief for Adults 64mcg Benacort 64mcg Nasal Spray®	GSL/P depending on pack sizes	RRP £8.39 for 60 sprays; £10.99 for 120 sprays
	Mometasone 50mcg /dose nasal spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children under 18 years Pregnancy, breastfeeding 	Clarinaze Allergy Control 0.05% nasal spray®	P	RRP £14.99 for 140 sprays
	Xylometazoline 0.1% Nasal Spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children under 12 years Pregnancy, breastfeeding Taking MAOIs in last 14 days Recent neurosurgery, hypertension, CVD, hyperthyroidism, narrow angle glaucoma, diabetes mellitus. 	Otrivine Adult Nasal Spray® Otrivine Allergy Relief 0.1% Nasal Spray® Otrivine Congestion Relief 0.1% Nasal Spray®	GSL	From £3.99 for 10mL
	Oxymetazoline 0.05% Nasal Spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children under 12 years Pregnancy, breastfeeding Taking MAOIs in last 14 days CVD, hyperthyroidism, angle closure glaucoma or prostatic enlargement. 	Galpharm Blocked Nose Relief Nasal Spray	GSL	From £1.29 for 15mL

This edition is also available on the Primary Care Portal

ANTIHISTAMINES	Cetirizine 10mg tablets Cetirizine 1mg/ml solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children < 6 years - tablets, • Children < 2 years - solution (depending on the brand) • Renal impairment • Rare hereditary problems of fructose intolerance • Pregnancy, breastfeeding • Epilepsy 	Galpharm Hayfever & Allergy Cetirizine; Zirtek Allergy Relief®; Piriteze Allergy®; Benadryl Allergy One a Day®; Allacan®; Benadryl Allergy Children's Solution®	GSL/P depending on product and pack sizes	From 89p for 30 generic tablets From £4.89 for 70mL solution
	Loratadine 10mg Tablets Loratadine 5mg/5ml syrup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children < 6 years - tablets, • Children < 2 years – syrup and fast dissolving tablet • Pregnancy, breastfeeding • Liver impairment • Rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, the Lapp lactase deficiency or glucose- galactose malabsorption 	Galpharm Hayfever & Allergy Loratadine; Clarityn Allergy®	GSL/P depending on pack sizes	From 89p for 30 generic tablets From £3.00 for 70mL
	Chlorphenamine 4mg tablets Chlorphenamine 2mg/5ml solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children < 6 yrs – tablets, • Children < 1 years - solution • Pregnancy, breastfeeding • Taking MAOIs in last 14 days • Caution in epilepsy; raised IOP including glaucoma; prostatic hypertrophy; severe hypertension or CVD; bronchitis, bronchiectasis or asthma; hepatic or renal impairment • Rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, Lapp lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption 	Piriton® Allerief® Boots Allergy Relief Tablets	P	From £2.99 for 28 tablets RRP £6.50 for 150mL Piriton® Syrup
	Acrivastine 8mg capsules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 12 years • Adults over 65 years • Pregnancy, breastfeeding • Renal impairment • Rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, Lapp lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption 	Benadryl Allergy Relief®	GSL/P depending on pack sizes	From £2.49 for 7 capsules RRP £6.30 for 12 (GSL); £10.75 for 24 (GSL); £19.25 for 48 (P)
	Fexofenadine 120mg tablets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 12 years • Pregnancy, breastfeeding 	Histallay® Galpharm TreatHay® Allevia®	GSL	From £1.29 for 10; from £3.49 for 30
	EYE DROPS	Sodium cromoglicate 2% eye drops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 6 years • Pregnancy, breastfeeding 	Opticrom Hayfever® Allercrom® Murine Hayfever Relief®	GSL

Items of medication that can be purchased “over the counter” (OTC) are classified in two ways:

- P (Pharmacy only) - these items can only be purchased from a pharmacy
- GSL (General Sales List) – these items can be purchased from a pharmacy, supermarket, or other store.

P and GSL items can only be purchased for their licensed indications and often in limited quantities. Please see above the circumstances where it will be necessary to prescribe an OTC item (if appropriate) as it will not be possible to purchase it due to the restrictions of the licence.

Prices from www.otcdirectory.co.uk & high street retailers' websites (some products may be cheaper from online retailers).

RRP (Recommended Retail Price)