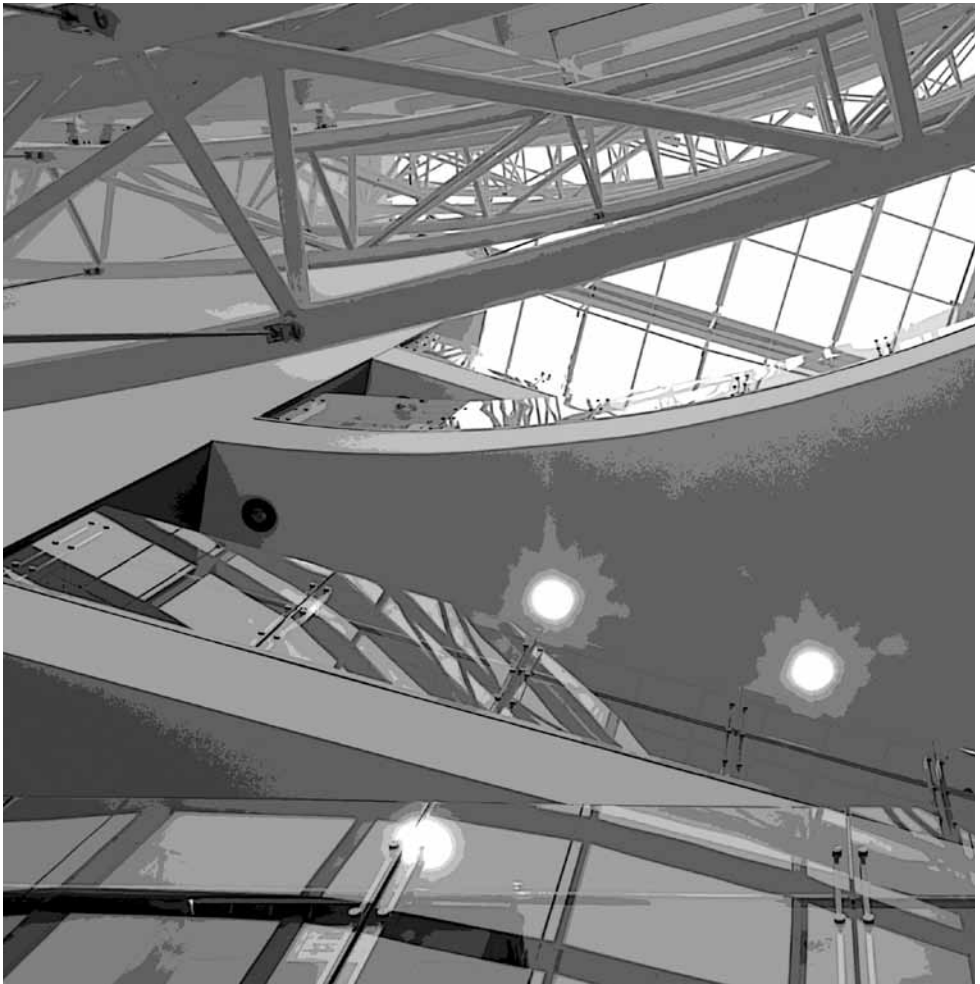


Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals **NHS**  
NHS Trust

ENT Outpatients, The West Wing

# Allergy Advice - Pollens

Information for patients



## Allergy to grass and pollen

The skin prick test has shown you have an allergy to pollens from grass and/or trees. This leaflet gives you more information about allergy to pollens and some things you can do to help control your symptoms.

## What happens if you have an allergy to pollen?

Pollen is a very fine powder produced by plants. It is carried through the air to help fertilise plants, flowers and trees.

You may be allergic to only one or to several types of pollen. People with a pollen allergy are mainly affected in the summer months but can suffer for most of the year.

Your immune system reacts abnormally to the pollen by releasing chemicals which cause inflammation of the nose, throat, eyes and lungs. This reaction is called rhinitis, or hayfever. Symptoms may include:

- A blocked and/or runny nose
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Itching (throat, nose, eyes)
- Wheezing
- Impaired smell

Symptoms are likely to be worse at certain times of the year, depending on which types of pollen you are allergic to.

## Allergen calendar

Things which cause an allergic reaction are called allergens. The following calendar shows the most common allergens and the time of year when they may affect you. *(It also includes moulds and house dust mite which some people are allergic to.)*

January	Alternaria, Aspergillus (moulds)
February	Alternaria, Aspergillus (moulds)
March	Alder
April	Ash, birch, plane, pine
June	Grass, nettles, flowers
July	Grass, nettles, flowers
August	Mugwort, nettles, flowers
September	Nettles
October	House dust mite
November	Alternaria, Aspergillus (moulds)
December	Alternaria, Aspergillus (moulds)

## How can I reduce my exposure to pollen?

It is impossible to avoid grass and tree pollen completely, but there are simple steps you can follow to reduce your exposure.

- Pollen is usually at its highest levels in the summer months, in the early morning. You will be least affected indoors, at the seaside or in mountainous areas.
- Keep car windows shut when driving.
- Shake any washing that you've been drying outside before you bring it in.

- Wear sunglasses to limit the amount of pollen getting into your eyes.
- Get someone else to mow your lawn for you.
- Take note of the pollen forecasts on the weather bulletins.

We realize that it will not always be practical to follow this advice all of the time. Just do what you can. All these steps will help to reduce your exposure and keep your symptoms to a minimum.

## Further information

[www.allergyuk.org](http://www.allergyuk.org); Helpline 01322 619898

[www.healthy-house.co.uk](http://www.healthy-house.co.uk); 0845 450 5950 (Local rate call)

[www.allergymatters.com](http://www.allergymatters.com)

[www.netdoctor.co.uk](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk)

You may also telephone the ENT Nurse Practitioner on:

**Oxford (01865) 231182**

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@orh.nhs.uk**

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