

Auckland Medical Group

What's Happening?



SPRING HAS SPRUNG..

Finally!! The first days of sunshine and warmer weather and it feels like spring is here at last. Its been a long wait to see the back of winter this year and after a season in which the Northeast was hit hardest in the country by flu, I'm sure most of us are happy to see some double digits on the thermometer and get a chance to absorb some much needed vitamin D!



PRACTICE NEWS

First thing to do is catch you up with the practice news. Its been a very positive start to the year with our wonderful backbone of staff working steadily away to give you the best practice that we can.

We've had a great stable clinical team for a good while now and I'm sure you're all familiar with the names that are popping up on the board, as Dr Howells and Dr Otto continue their year with us with a successful finish to their training at the end of August in sight. Dr Potter is our new training doctor, here with us until August so we hope you will help us to make him welcome.



If you are in doubt about who you're seeing you now have the dubious pleasure of being able to check us all out on the picture board in the waiting rooms. It's amazing how unflattering the NHS photo ID's can be! Worse than a passport pic!

SEASONAL SNEEZES..

It seems like the time of year to start talking about the seasonal affliction that many of you suffer from ie **hayfever**. Who knows whether it's going to be a good year or a bad one this time?

Fingers crossed there aren't too many of you out there unhappily looking forward to a spring/summer season blighted by the blocked up nose, itchy eyes and general flu like misery of severe hayfever.

Some people are only effected mildly or by certain types of pollen but unfortunately some of us are effected by everything. It might help (or at least you might find it interesting to know) which kind of pollens are around at what times of year to cause problems:

- * **Tree pollen: Late March - mid May**
- * **Grass pollen: Mid May - July**
- * **Weed pollen: Late June - September**



Those of you who do suffer may have done your own research on how to treat it but here's **a few tips that might keep the misery at bay:-**

Wear sunglasses – they protect your eyes from pollen and UV damage

Give your coat a shake – we all have clothes we wear most days, such as a favourite jacket or coat..

Rinse your hair regularly

Keep pets clean

Watch the weather forecast

Try catching the pollen before it gets in your nose by **applying Vaseline around your nostrils** to trap the pollen

Keep windows closed and keep the pollen outside

Take a trip to the seaside

Hide from high pollen counts

Have a shower/change as soon as you get in
–put your clothes in the wash when you've spent time in the great outdoors so you can wash away the pollen that's still perching on your clothes and hair

Dry clothes inside – all sorts of pollen can collect on your clothes while they're outside

EATING TIPS

FOODS WHICH MAY HELP



***Spicy chilli peppers** - they widen your airways if your nose is blocked

***Green vegetables, berries, beans, apples** - these foods contain quercetin which suppresses histamine, the chemical responsible for all those coldy fluey feelings.



***Chamomile or nettle tea** - these are both anti-inflammatory

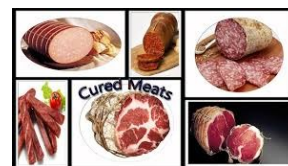


***Local honey** - lots of people swear by eating this to keep hayfever at bay - it does make scientific sense - kind of like a vaccination exposing you to the local pollen in a different form

FOOD TO AVOID

You should avoid foods and drinks that contain histamine as they'll make your symptoms worse—eg:

- * Pickles
- * Cured and smoked meats
- * Nuts
- * Cheese
- * Fish
- * Alcohol



MEDICATION

There are loads of different anti-hayfever tablets available to buy over the counter. They have different names, packaging and ad campaigns telling you they're the best....The truth is that most of the hayfever tablets you can buy are one of 3 medicines– Chlorphenamine, (Piriton), Cetirizine or Loratidine.

So ... best to ignore the ad campaigns and fancy packaging and **buy the cheapest one of those that works for you**. Some people suit one better than the other. Remember to check if it's one that will make you drowsy before you take it though.

If you have a real problem with hayfever It's also worth buying the nasal sprays and eye drops to help your body from every angle.



We do understand that a lot of you suffer at this time of year (just when you should be having fun and enjoying the outdoors.) We really do... because some of us suffer with the same problem. And many people do make appointments to see the doctor or phone asking for tests or treatment.

We do need to let you know though that from this year particularly our funding authority have advised us that **we should not be prescribing any medications that can be bought over the counter**. As you all know the NHS is strapped for cash and we all need to do everything we can to save it money. We also do not arrange for allergy testing unless you have had an extreme allergic reaction.

There are some unusual circumstances, however, in which we do prescribe medication for hayfever but for the vast majority of sufferers the combination of following the guidance above and taking regular medication should keep the pollen at bay. **If in doubt or you're really struggling then please call and ask for a triage appointment on the day. We'll call you back and talk through your options on the phone.** Unless there's some doubt about what the diagnosis is – there is very little that seeing you for an examination will add so a phone call will usually do the trick and probably be far more convenient for you.

Last but not least ... to help you get the best deal I've added on some tables (borrowed from the money saving expert website) to let you know where you can get what for the least amount of money.

Cheapest 30-tablet packs in store (one-a-day)

Cheapest generic Cetirine	Cheapest Piriteze, Zirtek or branded equivalent tablets
<p>Asda: N/A Boots: £1.99 Sainsbury's: £3 Superdrug: £1.99 Tesco: N/A Waitrose: N/A</p>	<p>Asda: £9.99 Boots: £9.99 Sainsbury's: £10 Superdrug: £9.99 Tesco: £10 Waitrose: £10</p>

Cheapest 30-tablet packs in store (one-a-day)

Cheapest generics Loratidine	Cheapest Clarityn tablets
<p>Asda: £2.50 Boots: £1.99 Sainsbury's: £2.80 Superdrug: £1.99 Tesco: N/A Waitrose: £2.75</p>	<p>Asda: £9 Boots: £9.99 Sainsbury's: £10 Superdrug: £9.99 Tesco: N/A Waitrose: £9.99</p>

Cheapest 30-tablet packs in store (taken every four to six hours)

Cheapest generics	Cheapest Piriton tablets
<p>Boots: £2.99 Superdrug: £2.79</p>	<p>Boots: £3.69 Superdrug: £3.69</p>

