

## The Impact of Hayfever in Pharmacy

It has been reported that one-in-five Irish people suffer from an allergy to pollen and LloydsPharmacy research shows that a third (33%) of adults have experienced hay fever symptoms in the last 12 months, with people's everyday lives being impacted quite substantially as a result. Of those experiencing symptoms, 39% said that their sleep has been impacted and 56% are spending less time outside as a result of their symptoms.



Written by Denis O'Driscoll,  
Superintendent Pharmacist,  
LloydsPharmacy

A further survey carried out by the Asthma Society of Ireland and ALK has revealed that 30% of those suffering from hayfever in Ireland have never spoken to a healthcare professional about how to relieve symptoms.

Pollen season typically runs from April to September and some people across Ireland can experience hayfever as the pollen levels increase. The start of the season is influenced by where you live in the country, with the north having a later start and a much shorter season, while urban areas will have a lower pollen count than the countryside.

Pollen counts this year have been up compared to last year and this has driven sales. We are seeing more customers in stores experiencing hayfever symptoms and the category is experiencing double digit growth as a result.

New entrants into the market such as Telfast and Fusion Allergy have also potentially brought new customers into the category. Fusion allergy is a drug free range of Eye Drops, Lozenges, and Nasal Sprays for patients. Telfast was a POM to P switch meaning that patients would have previously needed a script to buy it. Its claim is that it provides 24hour allergy relief and is also non drowsy. These brands are bringing incremental sales to the category

without cannibalising other brands. They also allowed us to drive a strong allergy message this year – all LloydsPharmacy stores now have a more complete range to meet customer needs.

The biggest challenge this year for our pharmacy teams during hayfever season is the pandemic, as symptoms of hayfever and Covid-19 are similar. Therefore, it has been more important than ever to manage hayfever symptoms correctly. LloydsPharmacy research shows some of the most common hayfever symptoms range from sneezing (76%), runny or blocked nose (72%) and itchy, red and/or watery eyes (71%).

While there is currently no cure for hayfever, most people can relieve their symptoms with treatment, with many finding an improvement as they get older.

It is also important to be able to discuss the right product for the patient when they come in for a consultation. The key to treating hayfever is finding the treatment that works for the patient – there is no magic bullet as each person needs to be holistically treated and advised of all the various products that may help. Our teams give advice that is personal to customers' symptoms, medical history and lifestyle. Pharmacists and their teams are highly trained health professionals and can play a

significant role in the management of hayfever and throughout the season are advising customers on the right regime for each individual customer.

Such as knowing when to recommend a nasal spray and/or eye drops alongside oral medication and our colleagues being able to give customers additional advice such as wearing sunglasses to give eyes extra protection, using nasal rinses to clear pollen out of sinuses etc.

GSL Allergy Gondola displays are working well to disrupt customers on their journey through the store. Using education lead POS has meant customers can self-select off the GSL ends and this is contributing to growth in the category.

During hayfever season we advise our pharmacy teams to merchandise GSL/ Med Device SKUs front of counter. Along with having their behind counter planograms in place so high volume P Only SKUs such as Telfast and Cetirine are in easy

reach of colleagues and visible to customers.

LloydsPharmacy research found that 1 in 5 of those that have had hayfever symptoms in the past 12 months do not use products or take medication to help relieve their hayfever symptoms. With 20% of people still not treating symptoms its clear there is still massive growth potential in this category. When it comes to deciding on which products to buy, previous experience when using a product (48%) and the advice of the pharmacist (40%) are deemed to be most important according to our research.

### Notes

LloydsPharmacy research was conducted by Empathy Research on behalf of LloydsPharmacy. Research was conducted through an online survey across a nationally representative sample of N=1,000 adults aged 18+. Quotas were placed on gender, age, social class and region with weighting applied to ensure final data was representative of these quotas.

