

Hints For Hay-Fever Sufferers

An estimated 18 Million people in the UK population suffer from hayfever. Itchy eyes and noses, constant sneezing and difficulty in breathing are the most common symptoms. The effects are often worsened in urban areas where dust and car pollution add to the problem. Contact lens wearers, suffering from irritated eyes, will benefit from following these guidelines.

Do's

- DO try to avoid wearing contact lenses in hot, dry or dusty environments. If there is no choice, try to wear sunglasses as well, which will help protect your lenses and eyes from dust and pollen.
- DO try to avoid wearing your contact lenses when gardening or mowing the lawn, as dust and grass pollen will get into your eyes.
- DO ask your eyecare practitioner about lubricating drops. Warm and dusty conditions may cause dryness in your eyes.
- DO ask your GP if you will be helped by many of the new medications for hayfever. These anti-allergy products do not make you sleepy but greatly reduce the symptoms of allergy.
- DO ask your GP about anti-inflammatory drops, which may prevent the worst signs of irritation.
- DO wear your prescription spectacles on days when the pollen count is particularly high, especially if you live in an urban area.
- DO wear your lenses in the evenings. The pollen count is usually much lower then and therefore less irritating to the eyes.
- DO reduce the length of time you wear your lenses for everyday. A good benchmark is around 12 hours.

Don'ts

- DON'T sunbathe in your contact lenses and remember not to get suntan lotion on them.

The Eyecare Trust is a registered charity that exists to promote awareness of all aspects of eye health. For more information call our public information line on 0845 129 5001 or log on to www.eyecaretrust.org.uk

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- DON'T ever take your lenses out and clean them in your mouth to try to wash off any pollen or dust.
- DON'T continue to wear your lenses if your eyes become very sore and red. If in doubt, take them out and contact your eyecare practitioner.
- DON'T use lubricating eye drops without first seeking professional advice from your optometrist or GP. By following these simple guidelines, most hay fever sufferers should be able to wear their contact lenses throughout the hayfever season.

Factsheet

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