



Put the spring back in your step with these 10 ways to beat Spring Allergies

Spring is officially here! Warmer climates mean more time to enjoy and appreciate the outdoors. At the same time however seasonal allergies emerge in earnest to give us another ailment to fight.

From sneezes to sore throats, pollen problems to eye complaints, there is a long list that we have to potentially contend with.

Hay fever affects around one in four people in the UK.ⁱ Yet sneezes, itchy eyes and lethargy can affect all of us so there is reason for us all to take notice and become as prepared as possible in time for spring. Allergy Awareness Week on **25th April – 1st May** is a great opportunity for everyone to learn more about allergy symptoms and how best to combat them.

Sarah Farrant, Optometrist and Dry Eye Specialist explains, *“Throughout the year our eyes are subjected to a lot of environmental changes, and spring is often when we notice having itchy, red or dry eyes the most. When pollen and dust is swept into our eyes we create reflex tears to flush out the unwanted pollutants but this also reduces the quality of our tears meaning our eyes still feel dry and sore – it’s a vicious cycle. Seasonal allergies such as hay fever can affect our confidence and our quality of life significantly but luckily there are lots of things that we can do to protect our eyes.”*

Here are Sarah's top tips to keep you happy, healthy and ahead of the game.

1. Keep your eyes under wraps

Wearing wraparound sunglasses can reduce the amount of pollen or spores that enter your eyes. Allergy irritated eyes are also more sensitive to sunlight so stylish shades can help to ease the discomfort of sore eyes too!

2. Shampoo away the pollen

Pollen is often compared to dust but it's actually much stickier! When it finds its way into your hair it can transfer onto your pillow causing further irritation throughout the night and leave you feeling groggy in the morning. If you have been outside during the day taking a warm shower before bed can help minimise the impact and promote a good night's sleep!

3. Travel Smart

If you are planning a spring holiday, and are prone to allergies, try and do some research about your destination before booking. It is usually best to stay away from damp, humid climates because tropical climates are a haven for mites, moulds and pollens. A trip to the seaside is a must on most holiday makers lists. Being located around bays and having mild temperatures mean they're low allergy destinations.

4. Time it right

Avoid outside activity when the air is warming up and cooling down because the pollen count is highest at these times, generally 8-10am and 5-7pm. Keeping your bedroom windows open at

night can help as heavy curtains and drapes are a magnet for dust particles and mites, but remember to do the opposite when driving to ensure the pollen can't come in!

5. Try hydrating eye drops

Irritated and red looking eyes can be due to dryness which may leave eyes feeling "gritty", tired and sore. Mild and refreshing lubricating eye drops like Hycosan Fresh (RRP £8.99 in all good pharmacies and opticians) have a preservative-free formulation of all natural ingredients including natural plant extract Euphrasia to reduce redness and provide natural relief for mild eye irritation!

6. Filter the fur

New research from Scope Ophthalmics finds that nearly half of the population have a furry friend living at home. If you are a proud pet owner try an HPEA (high-efficiency particulate air) filter to trap allergens before they can irritate your eyes.

7. Getting green fingers

In the UK 40% of us consider ourselves to be a regular gardener. With the weather getting warmer, allotments, garden centres, green houses and flower beds are calling! Some flowers are available in a hypoallergenic form – sunflowers without the pollen are a sure way to help you feel fresh as a daisy!

8. Dust jackets aren't for books

One in ten of us are living or working in a dusty environment. Whether you're spring cleaning, your neighbours are undertaking renovation works or you work in a dusty office, airborne particles can trigger a host of symptoms. While you may think that the air freshener is helping improve the environment it can actually be aggravating the air you breathe even more. Avoid artificial scents, ensure a window is open nearby wherever possible and keep the dust at bay with a microfiber cloth.

9. Parents - give Teddy & Friends a bath

While they are part of the family, it's highly likely that your children's teddy bears (not to mention all of their other "friends") harbour lots of allergy-producing dust mites. Ditch the mites by washing your child's stuffed animals every week in really hot water.

10. Take those shoes off!

Your favourite spring wedges might be what's tracking pollutants, allergens, and toxins into your home. To keep spores out of your house, wipe your shoes well on a mat and then keep them in the hall, garage, or laundry room out of sight!

Try a new online [Eye Health Test](#) to see if you could be experiencing dry eyes and find out what to do if you are!

-ENDS-

Background information

HYCOSAN FRESH - the newest product to join the Hycosan range provides freshness for dry and tired eyes. A preservative free eye drop with an all natural formulation, it contains 0.03% Sodium Hyaluronate and plant extract Euphrasia for natural relief of mild eye irritation. Each bottle contains a guaranteed 300 equal drops and remains sterile for 6 months from opening thanks to its unique bottle design. Suitable for use with all contact lenses. Available in all good pharmacies and opticians.

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Reference: ¹ www.allergyuk.org/the-management-of-allergy/allergen-avoidance
