

# Ashcroft Pharmacy

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## Opening Times

Monday to Friday - 9am - 5pm  
Saturday & Sunday - Closed

## Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for March 2021

1. How common are allergies in the UK?
2. Name two common allergens.
3. Name three symptoms.
4. What causes these symptoms?
5. What should I do if I think I have an allergy?
6. What is anaphylaxis?
7. What is the best way to prevent my symptoms?
8. How can I limit the number of house dust mites in my home?
9. How can my symptoms be treated?
10. How do I treat anaphylaxis?



Don't let allergies  
control your day

Answers on the bottom of page two

### Spring is on the horizon.

Which means that it is the beginning of the hay fever season. However, this is just one of the many allergies that people can suffer. About 1 in 4 of the population in the UK will be affected by an allergy in their lives. They are particularly common in children.

An allergy is a reaction your body has to a particular food or substance. Most allergies, are mild and can be controlled but occasionally severe reactions which can be life threatening can occur. This is called

anaphylaxis and requires immediate treatment with an adrenaline auto-injector.

### Common allergies

Allergic reactions usually happen within a few minutes of exposure to an allergen. They can cause:

- Sneezing
- A runny or blocked nose
- Red, itchy, watery eyes
- Wheezing and coughing
- A red itchy rash
- Worsening of asthma

A severe reaction can cause swelling of the lips, tongue, eyes and face. If you think you or your child may have an allergy, keep a diary to see if there is a link to something you eat, touch or inhale that triggers your reaction.

Then you should see your GP. If the reaction

is particularly severe or it's not clear what you are allergic to, they may refer you to an allergy specialist.

### Managing an allergy

The most effective way to manage an allergy is to avoid the allergen. Below is some practical advice to help you



avoid the most common allergens:

**House dust mites** - this is one of the biggest causes of allergies. You can limit the number of mites in your home by:

- Choosing wood or vinyl floor coverings
- Fitting roller blinds which can be easily wiped
- Choosing leather plastic or vinyl furniture
- Cleaning cushions, soft toys by washing at a high temperature or vacuuming.
- Using allergy tested covers on mattresses, duvets and pillows.
- Using a vacuum cleaner with an HEPA filter
- Regularly wiping surfaces with a damp clean cloth

**Pets** - here it's the flakes of their dead skin (dander), saliva and dried urine that cause the allergic reaction. If you cannot permanently remove the pet from your home, you could try:

- Keeping pets outside as much as possible
- Not allowing pets in bedrooms
- Washing pets at least once a week
- Regularly grooming pets outside
- Regularly washing their bedding
- Using an air filter in rooms where you spend most of your time.
- Increasing ventilation with fans or air conditioning



**Mould spores** - you can help prevent these by:

- Keeping your home dry and well ventilated
- Removing indoor plants
- Not drying clothes indoors
- Dealing with any damp or condensation in your home
- Avoiding damp buildings, damp woods and rotten leaves

**Food allergies** - by law, food manufacturers must clearly label any foods that contain something that is known to cause allergic reactions in some people. If you are eating out:

- Don't rely on the menu description.
- Communicate clearly with the waiting staff and ask for their advice.
- Avoid buffets and bakeries.
- Stick with simple dishes as they are less likely to have "hidden" ingredients.

**Pollen allergies**, more commonly known as hay fever, can be helped if you:

- Stay inside if the pollen count is high.
- Avoid drying clothes outside when the pollen count is high.
- Wear wraparound sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- Keep doors and windows shut where possible.
- Shower and change your clothes after being outside.
- Avoid grassy areas especially in the early morning, evening or night when the pollen count is highest.
- If you have a lawn try asking someone else to cut it for you.

**Insect bites and stings** - if you have ever suffered a bad reaction to an insect bite or sting, it's important to minimise your risk when you are outside by:

- Covering exposed skin
- Wear shoes
- Apply insect repellent.
- Avoid wearing strong perfumes as these can attract insects.

**There are several medicines that can help control your symptoms. Many of these are available from our pharmacy so if you want advice on which would be best for your symptoms speak to a member of our team.**

Allergy Tablets



Answers: Q1, Very - they affect 1 in 4 people at some point in their lives. Q2, Grass and tree pollen, dust mites, animal dander, food, insect bites and stings, mould. Q3, Sneezing, runny or blocked nose, red itchy, watery eyes, wheezing and coughing, a red itchy rash, worsening asthma, swollen lips, tongue, eyes or face. Q4, It's the reaction of your body's immune system to certain usually harmless substances as though they are harmful. Q5, Keep a diary to see if there is a link between something you eat, touch or inhale that triggers your reaction. Q6, It's a severe allergic reaction which can be life threatening. Q7, Avoid the things you are allergic to. Q8, Use wood flooring, fit roller blinds, choose plastic furniture, clean cushions and soft toys regularly, allergy proof mattresses and duvets, use HEPA vacuum filters, regularly wipe surfaces with a damp cloth. Q9, If they are mild you can buy something from your local pharmacy. If they are severe you should see your doctor. Q10, If you are at risk of experiencing a severe allergic reaction make sure you carry 2 adrenaline auto-injectors with you at all times.