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Popping ears and watery eyes? Specsavers reveal the best ways to tackle hay fever

MOST of us welcome the arrival of spring but the warmer weather often heralds the start of symptoms such as sneezing, headaches and itchy, red or watery eye for hay fever sufferers.

That is why Specsavers is providing advice on how to handle hay fever.

Hay fever is an allergic reaction to pollen and is usually worse in the summer months. As well as sneezing and a blocked or runny nose, hay fever can also cause red, itchy or watery eyes, which can be particularly problematic for contact lens wearers.

Specsavers clinical spokesperson, Dr Nigel Best says: 'Hay fever sufferers who wear contact lenses may notice the vision through their lenses can appear smeary and eyes can generally feel uncomfortable.'

'However, there are some things contact lens wearers can try to help reduce the irritation.'

'Contact lens-friendly eye drops can help to calm down any itchiness and wearing prescription glasses (particularly wraparound sunglasses) can prevent pollen from getting into your eyes.'

'Those suffering with hay fever could also try daily disposable lenses during the summer months.'

Dr Best also recommends: 'While it's not always possible, staying inside when pollen count is high will help to avoid irritation or showering and changing your clothes when you get home will also help to remove pollen from skin and hair.'

But, it is not just eyes which are affected, hay fever can also cause your ears to become itchy or inflamed.

Specsavers' chief audiologist Gordon Harrison says: 'Allergic reactions can cause the outer ear to itch or swell. The middle ear contains the Eustachian tube, which acts as a drainage tube, but when mucus clogs the middle ear it affects that drainage. This leads to a build-up in pressure, which can cause discomfort, popping in the ears or earache.

'To avoid irritation, try putting Vaseline around the nose to trap pollen, vacuum and dust regularly or you can try over the counter pain relief. Showering and changing after being outside will help remove pollen and antihistamines decongestants can help relieve symptoms.

Your eyes and ears can reveal a lot about your general health and so it's important to have regular eye and hearing tests – once every two years, or more often if recommended by your optometrist or audiologist. To book your next appointment visit www.specsavers.co.uk.

For more information on eye health and hay fever visit <https://www.specsavers.co.uk/eye-health/hay-fever>.

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For more information on eye health contact the Specsavers press team:

T: 020 7053 6000

E: teh@onlybeattie.com