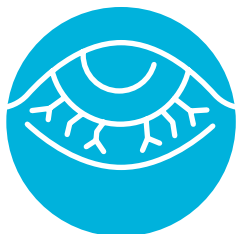
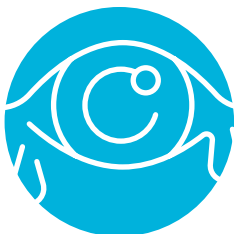


How to prevent and manage ocular allergies

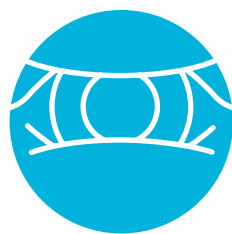
You may be suffering from allergic conjunctivitis if you have:



Red and itchy eyes¹



Watery eyes¹



Eyelids that are swollen²



Symptoms usually affect both eyes.²

As eye allergies often cause irritation, contact lens wearers may find it more comfortable switching to wearing glasses.³

Many people also have a runny, stuffy and congested nose.¹

What are the most common allergens?

The main causes of eye allergies are:

- Pollen¹
- Household dust⁴ and dust mites¹
- Animal hair⁴
- Food allergies can also trigger allergic conjunctivitis symptoms⁵



The allergens responsible for the allergic reaction must be identified and measures should be taken to prevent exposure to these substances.⁶

Besides limiting exposure to allergens, there are several types of medications that can help relieve allergy symptoms.⁷



Recommendations and preventative measures

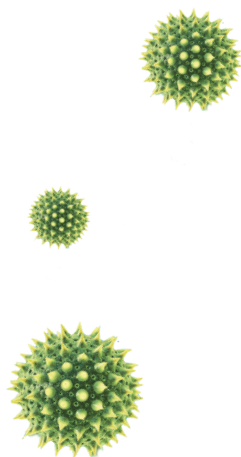
Whether at home or outdoors, there are many substances capable of triggering eye allergies, such as grass or tree pollens, mold, or cigarette smoke.¹



The best way to reduce discomfort and prevent allergic reactions is to avoid trigger allergens as much as possible.¹

Useful tips to avoid exposure to dust, dust mite and animal allergens:

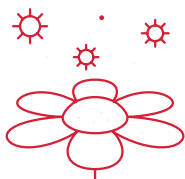
- Remove dust traps such as soft furnishings from the bedroom⁸
- Use allergen-proof pillow and mattress covers, and washable cotton or synthetic blankets⁹
- Avoid feather bedding⁹
- Change air conditioning filters once a month¹⁰
- Clean regularly with a damp cloth or vacuum cleaner¹⁰
- If you have to do housework, wear a face mask¹⁰
- Wash bed linen weekly in hot water (at least 54° C)¹⁰
- Keep your woollen clothes in plastic zipper bags when they are not being used⁹
- If you have pets, do not allow them into your bedroom, and bath them every week to remove hair and other allergens¹⁰



Useful tips to avoid exposure to pollen allergens:

Pollen is a very fine powder produced by trees, flowers and grasses to fertilise plants.¹¹

- Check the pollen count on the weather forecast before leaving home⁷
- If possible, stay indoors and limit your outdoor activities when the pollen count is high, or consider wearing a face mask^{7,13}
- Take a shower and wash your hair at night to remove any pollen built up during the day¹²
- Avoid mowing the lawn, as this stirs up pollen¹²
- Wear sunglasses to help keep pollen out of your eyes, as well as to protect your eyes from sun exposure^{13,14}
- A wide brim hat may help reduce the amount of allergens blowing into your eyes¹²
- Keep your car windows closed when travelling¹⁵



Do you know your ocular allergy triggers?



One of the most effective ways to manage an ocular allergic reaction is to minimise exposure and avoid eye allergens^{6,12}

How the body reacts to allergens

Allergies are caused when the body's immune system reacts to an allergen⁷



When an allergen comes into contact with the eyes, mast cells in the eyes release histamine and other substances to fight off the allergen⁶



This reaction causes your eyes to become red, itchy and watery⁶



Sometimes, eyes can react to other allergens that don't necessarily come into direct contact with the eye, such as:⁶

- Certain foods
- Insect bites or stings

Eye allergies could also be hereditary.⁶

Medications that can help control ocular allergy symptoms⁷

Some medications are available over the counter, while others require a prescription. Discuss your symptoms with your doctor or pharmacist to find which option is best for you.¹

Mast cell stabiliser eye drops

These prevent the release of histamine and other substances that cause allergy symptoms.¹

Antihistamine eye drops

These reduce the itching, redness and swelling associated with eye allergies.¹

Mast cell stabiliser and antihistamine eye drops

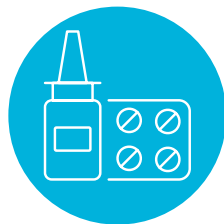
The combined action of these drops treat and prevent eye allergies, providing quick, long-lasting relief of itching, redness, tearing and burning.¹

NSAID (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs) eye drops

These drops relieve itching, and may cause stinging when applied.¹

Corticosteroid eye drops

These help treat chronic eye allergy symptoms. Treatment for more than 2 weeks should be done under the supervision of an ophthalmologist, due to possible side effects.¹



If you experience any of these eye allergy symptoms, visit your optometrist, ophthalmologist, family doctor or pharmacist for treatment recommendations.



For more information, visit:
www.keepeyesinsight.co.za



Keep Eyes In Sight 

References: 1. American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI). Eye Allergies. Causes, Symptoms and Treatment [Internet]. Available from: <https://acaai.org/allergies/allergic-conditions/eye-allergy/>. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 2. Medical News Today. Allergic Conjunctivitis. Treatment, symptoms, and causes [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/157692>. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 3. Optometrists.org. Eye Allergies and Contact Lenses [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.optometrists.org/general-practice-optometry/guide-to-eye-conditions/dry-eye/tips-for-allergic-eyes/eye-allergies-and-contact-lenses/>. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 4. Shroff Eye. Eye allergies and how to prevent them [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.shroffeye.org/patient-information/conditions/eye-allergies-and-how-to-prevent-them/>. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 5. Fouad SH, Baioumy SA, Zidan OFM, *et al*. Incidence of Food allergy among patients with allergic conjunctivitis. *Egypt J Immunol* 2023;30(4):134-144. 6. Mendoza O. Eye Allergies: Why are My Eyes Itchy? American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/allergies>. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 7. WebMD. Allergy Symptoms: Signs, Symptoms and Treatment [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.webmd.com/allergies/allergy-symptoms>. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 8. NCBI Bookshelf. Overview: Dust mite allergies [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK447098/>. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 9. Medicinenet. Allergy Treatment Begins at Home: Remedies & Products [Internet]. Available from: https://www.medicinenet.com/allergy_treatment_begins_at_home/article.htm. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 10. Mayo Clinic. Allergy-proof your home [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/allergies/in-depth/allergy/art-20049365>. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 11. Healthline. Pollen Allergy: Types, Symptoms, Causes, Treatment & More [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.healthline.com/health/allergies/pollen>. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 12. American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI). Eye Allergy Overview [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/conditions-library/allergies/eye-allergy-overview>. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 13. Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA). Pollen Allergies [Internet]. Available from: <https://aafa.org/allergies/types-of-allergies/pollen-allergy/>. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 14. ReFocus Eye Health Manchester. Manage Eye Allergies Outdoors [Internet]. Available from: <https://manchester.refocuseyedoctors.com/how-to-protect-your-eyes-from-allergens-while-outdoors/>. [Accessed 30 September 2025]. 15. Allergy Associates of New Hampshire (AANH). Allergies [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.allergiesnh.com/allergies>. [Accessed 30 September 2025].