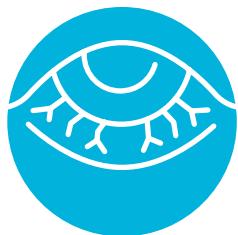


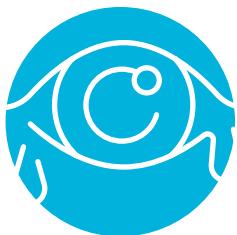


## How to prevent and manage ocular allergies

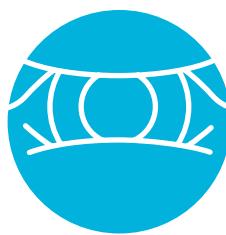
# You may be suffering from allergic conjunctivitis if you have:



Red and itchy eyes<sup>1</sup>



Watery eyes<sup>1</sup>



Eyelids that are swollen<sup>2</sup>



Symptoms usually affect both eyes.<sup>2</sup>

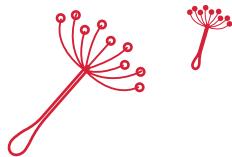
As eye allergies often cause irritation, contact lens wearers may find it more comfortable switching to wearing glasses.<sup>3</sup>

Many people also have a runny, stuffy and congested nose.<sup>1</sup>

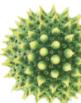
# What are the most common allergens?

The main causes of eye allergies are:

- Pollen<sup>1</sup>
- Household dust<sup>4</sup> and dust mites<sup>1</sup>
- Animal hair<sup>4</sup>
- Food allergies can also trigger allergic conjunctivitis symptoms<sup>5</sup>



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



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



## 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.<sup>1</sup>



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

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

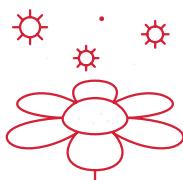
- Remove dust traps such as soft furnishings from the bedroom<sup>8</sup>
- Use allergen-proof pillow and mattress covers, and washable cotton or synthetic blankets<sup>9</sup>
- Avoid feather bedding<sup>9</sup>
- Change air conditioning filters once a month<sup>10</sup>
- Clean regularly with a damp cloth or vacuum cleaner<sup>10</sup>
- If you have to do housework, wear a face mask<sup>10</sup>
- Wash bed linen weekly in hot water (at least 54° C)<sup>10</sup>
- Keep your woollen clothes in plastic zipper bags when they are not being used<sup>9</sup>
- If you have pets, do not allow them into your bedroom, and bathe them every week to remove hair and other allergens<sup>10</sup>



# Useful tips to avoid exposure to pollen allergens:

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

- Check the pollen count on the weather forecast before leaving home<sup>7</sup>
- If possible, stay indoors and limit your outdoor activities when the pollen count is high, or consider wearing a face mask<sup>7,13</sup>
- Take a shower and wash your hair at night to remove any pollen built up during the day<sup>12</sup>
- Avoid mowing the lawn, as this stirs up pollen<sup>12</sup>
- Wear sunglasses to help keep pollen out of your eyes, as well as to protect your eyes from sun exposure<sup>13,14</sup>
- A wide brim hat may help reduce the amount of allergens blowing into your eyes<sup>12</sup>
- Keep your car windows closed when travelling<sup>15</sup>





# 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<sup>6,12</sup>

## How the body reacts to allergens

Allergies are caused when the body's immune system reacts to an allergen<sup>7</sup>



When an allergen comes into contact with the eyes, mast cells in the eyes release histamine and other substances to fight off the allergen<sup>6</sup>



This reaction causes your eyes to become red, itchy and watery<sup>6</sup>



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

- Certain foods
- Insect bites or stings

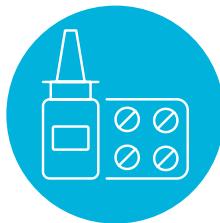
Eye allergies could also be hereditary.<sup>6</sup>

# Medications that can help control ocular allergy symptoms<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>1</sup>

## Mast cell stabiliser eye drops

These prevent the release of histamine and other substances that cause allergy symptoms.<sup>1</sup>



## Antihistamine eye drops

These reduce the itching, redness and swelling associated with eye allergies.<sup>1</sup>

## 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.<sup>1</sup>



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

These drops relieve itching, and may cause stinging when applied.<sup>1</sup>

## Corticosteroid eye drops

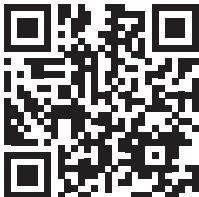
These help treat chronic eye allergy symptoms. Treatment for more than 2 weeks should be done under the supervision of an ophthalmologist, due to possible side effects.<sup>1</sup>



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](http://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://acai.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, Bajoumy 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](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 (AAAI). 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.refocusedydoctors.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].