



Hay fever can often be controlled using counter medication from your pharmacist. However, if your symptoms are more troublesome your pharmacist may advise you contact your GP, as you may require prescription medication.

#### You usually only need to see your GP if:

- you can't control your symptoms with over-the-counter medications, or you have troublesome side effects caused by the medication
- you're experiencing persistent complications of hay fever, such as worsening of asthma or repeated episodes of sinusitis
- the pattern of your symptoms is unusual, such as occurring during the winter or only at your workplace (it's likely that another substance other than pollen is responsible, and further testing will be needed to confirm this).

For severe and persistent hay fever, there's also a type of treatment called immunotherapy. It involves being exposed to small amounts of pollen over time, to build resistance to its allergic effects.

#### Self-help tips

It's sometimes possible to prevent the symptoms of hay fever by taking some basic precautions, such as:

- wearing wraparound sunglasses to stop pollen getting in your eyes when you're outdoors
- taking a shower and changing your clothes after being outdoors to remove the pollen on your body
- staying indoors when the pollen count is high (over 50 grains per cubic metre of air) applying a small amount of Vaseline (petroleum gel) to the nasal openings to trap pollen grains.



We all know that walking is a great form of exercise which is accessible to nearly everyone and also brings mental health benefits. Of course, we have already got the information panel in the waiting area at Mill Road Surgery which shows two different walking routes but we can expand on that.

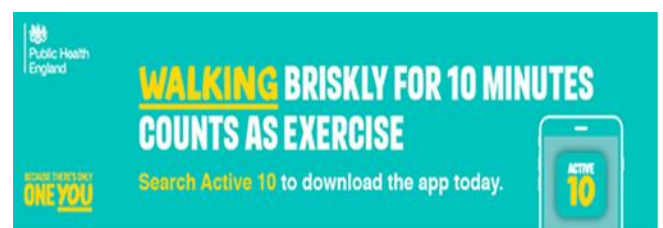
Colchester City Council organises "Wellness Walks" at Highwoods Country Park on Fridays and Sundays. These wellness walks are 1 mile round routes in Highwoods Country Park (allowing people to meet new people - possibly good for mental health) and they do a second lap to achieve the second mile. Some people have even used mobility scooters do it (seated) as they get fresh air, companionship and can do as much or as little as they like.

It's run by very knowledgeable volunteers and starts and ends at the cafe. No need to book in advance. For more information contact: <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/wellness-walks-highwoods-country-park/>

There is also the U3a Nordic Walking Group which meets at Highwoods Country Park on Tuesdays and Thursdays: For more information contact: <https://u3asites.org.uk/stanway/page/10525>

Myland Community Council organises monthly "Last Saturday Walks" which are held on the last Saturday of each month, departing from the war memorial on Nayland Road. Some people bring dogs:

If in doubt of terrain, or for more information contact: [robert.johnstone@mylandcommunitycouncil.gov.uk](mailto:robert.johnstone@mylandcommunitycouncil.gov.uk)





## Vitamin D deficiency health guide

Vitamin D is needed for healthy bones and muscles. Sunlight is our main source of vitamin D.

Groups at increased risk of vitamin D deficiency are:

- people with darker skin (including those from an African, African-Caribbean or South Asian background)
- those who are not often outdoors
- those who cover up most of their skin when outdoors

Everyone in the UK is advised to take a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms (400 international units) of vitamin D during the autumn and winter months (October to early March), when we cannot make vitamin D from sunlight.

Be aware of the difference between public health advice on supplementation and clinical treatment of deficiency. The latter will be at a higher dose and intended to restore optimal vitamin D levels safely but quickly.

Low income families in the UK who receive one of a range of income related benefits and tax credits may qualify for the Healthy Start scheme. Pregnant women, women with a child under 1 year of age and children aged up to 4 years can get free Healthy Start vitamin supplements which contain vitamin D.

Vitamin D plays an important role in bone health by regulating calcium and phosphate metabolism.

Low vitamin D status can lead to bone problems such as rickets in children, and bone pain (due to osteomalacia) or muscle weakness in adults. This may also increase the risk of falls in older people.

Exposure of the skin to sunlight in the spring and summer months is the main source of vitamin D. UK (October to early March), there is no sunlight of appropriate wavelength for synthesis of vitamin D in the skin and we rely on dietary sources.

## Prevention

Adults (including women who are pregnant or breastfeeding), young people and children over 4 years should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms (400 units, also called international units (IU)) of vitamin D. Adults, young people and children over 4 years should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms (400 units) of vitamin D throughout the year if they have little or no sunshine exposure because they:

- are not often outdoors, for example, if they are frail, housebound or living in a care home
- usually wear clothes that cover up most of their skin when outdoors
- if they have dark skin – for example, if they are of African, African-Caribbean or South Asian origin – because they may not make enough vitamin D from sunlight
- are spending most of their time indoors because of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Babies from birth to 1 year should have a daily supplement containing 8.5 micrograms (340 units) to 10 micrograms (400 units) of vitamin D throughout the year if they are:
  - Breastfed formula-fed and are having less than 500ml of infant formula a day (because infant formula is already fortified with vitamin D)
  - Children aged 1 year to 4 years should have a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms (400 units) of vitamin D throughout the year.

## Good sources of vitamin D

From about late March/early April to the end of September, most people should be able to make all the vitamin D they need from sunlight.

But between October and early March we do not make enough vitamin D from sunlight. Vitamin D is also found in a small number of foods, such as; oily fish – such as salmon, sardines, herring and mackerel, red meat, liver, egg yolks, fortified foods – such as some fat spreads and breakfast cereals.

**Because it is difficult to get the required amount of vitamin D through food alone it's best to take a vitamin D supplement during the autumn and winter, when sunlight is in short supply.**

## 5 tips for staying healthy abroad

After the past couple of years we've had, you might be itching to jump on a plane and spend a couple of weeks soaking up the sun — or exploring somewhere new. Are you planning a trip? Stay healthy while travelling abroad by having a health check-up and getting vaccinated.

### 1. Check if you need vaccinations

If you're travelling abroad in a country where serious infectious diseases are found, it's vital to get vaccinated before you travel. It's always a good idea to get a general health check before you travel, where your doctor can tell you if you need any vaccines, and if so, which ones.

### 2. Stock up on prescription medication

If you take prescription medication, make sure you stock up before your trip. Ideally, take enough to cover your whole trip, and a little bit extra in case your flight is delayed and you need to stay abroad a bit longer. When you head for the airport, take a copy of your prescription with you, as you might need it as you go through customs or airport security.

### 3. Note emergency phone numbers

**You never want to go on holiday and spend it in the hospital, but it's worth knowing who to call if you, a loved one, or a travel buddy gets sick. Check in advance what your travel insurance covers and what steps you might need to take to claim on your policy. If you're travelling in a country where your native language isn't spoken widely, try to learn some basic words.**

### 4. Wash your hands often

When you're travelling abroad, it becomes vital as you'll come into contact with germs and bacteria that your body may have never encountered before.

### 5. Avoid overloading on the good stuff

A holiday is a perfect excuse for a blowout. It's a time when many diets go out the window, and it's normal to drink a little more than you perhaps should — especially on an all-inclusive stay! A rich meal and sugary dessert washed down with your favourite tipple are okay once in a while, especially when you're on holiday, but our final travel tip is to avoid overdoing it.



## HOME CARE

When things get too much to manage on your own, Home Care is here to step in with expert, compassionate care in your home. In the 30+ years they have been providing care, their kind, empathetic carers have helped thousands of people with a wide range of needs and preferences to maintain an independent, comfortable lifestyle.

### Stability

Having a constant source of support means you don't have to worry about what the next day holds

### Companionship

You will benefit from having a friendly face to keep you company at any time, day or night

### Family independence

With bespoke support from their dedicated care team, you can retain your independence in your own home.

### Security

A carer can provide valuable, round-the-clock security, especially if you're living alone

### Family relief

Their holistic care plans provide much-needed relief to concerned family members

### Assurance

You know you'll be in the expert hands of a com  
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Patient Participation Group at**  
[mrsppgc@gmail.com](mailto:mrsppgc@gmail.com)