

## - Allergy / Virus

# Know the difference between hay fever and Covid-19 symptoms

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With the hay fever season in full swing, the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has issued advice on recognising the difference in symptoms between hay fever and Covid-19. With one in five Irish people living with hay fever, it is important that people understand how to recognise the key differences; for example, a fever or chills is common with Covid-19 but isn't seen in those suffering with hay fever.

Hay fever, also known as seasonal allergic rhinitis, is caused by pollen and spores creating an allergic reaction affecting the nose and sinuses. While it can occur at any time of year, sufferers are particularly impacted from the spring until autumn. Although hay fever is a relatively common condition, the symptoms can be extremely unpleasant.

### KNOW THE SIGNS

Ann Marie Horan, a community pharmacist and Executive Committee member of the IPU, issued the following advice to hay fever sufferers.

“With everyone on high alert for Covid-19 symptoms, it can be difficult to rationalise which symptoms could be hay fever and which are associated with Covid-19. The below comparisons are very useful”.

### SYMPTOMS

Sneezing – Hay Fever common, Covid-19 no; Runny or blocked nose – HF common, C-19 rare; Itchy/watery/ red eyes – HF common, C-19 no; Itchy mouth/ nose/ears – HF common, C-19 no; Earache – HF sometimes, C-19 no; Cough – HF sometimes (night time), C-19 common (usually dry and persistent); Loss of smell – HF sometimes, C-19 sometimes; Headache – HF sometimes, C-19 sometimes; Shortness of breath – HF sometimes, C-19 sometimes; Fatigue – HF sometimes, C-19 sometimes; Fever (above 38 degrees C) or chills – HF no, C-19 common; Aches & pains – HF No, C-19 sometimes; Sore throat HF no, C-19 sometimes.

### ASTHMA TRIGGER

“Hay fever can make life miserable, especially for people with severe symptoms.

However, the condition can often be effectively managed with a range of treatment options, including antihistamines, decongestants, corticosteroid nasal sprays and anti-allergy eye-drops. The key to treating hay fever is finding the treatment that works for you.

Pharmacists also warn that as hay fever is a significant trigger for asthma, asthma patients should ensure they carry their inhaler at all times and use it as prescribed. Up to date information on pollen forecasts in your region can be found at: [https:// www.met.ie/forecasts/ pollen](https://www.met.ie/forecasts/pollen)

Pharmacists also want to emphasise, that even during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, pharmacies are still open and available to support people in the community, and you don't need to suffer in silence.