

UK Pharmacy Chain Issues Storm Warning For Hay Fever Sufferers

The **co-operative** pharmacy

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Hay fever sufferers could be about to experience the "perfect storm" in 2010, thanks to the gathering forces of Mother Nature, a leading UK pharmacy has warned.

The unusual combination of birch pollen levels peaking again this year, as part of a biannual cycle coinciding with a late spring, could cause mayhem for those with hay fever, according to The Co-operative Pharmacy.

Lisa McCreesh, Clinical Governance Pharmacist, at The Co-operative Pharmacy, says: "We are urging people to make sure they get effective treatment if they are suffering from common hay fever symptoms including a blocked or runny nose, sneezing and headache, as these could easily be confused with colds at this time of year."

"Most people associate hay fever with the summer months of May and June when grass pollen levels are high. But hay fever is also caused by being allergic to high levels of birch tree pollen in the atmosphere and other types of pollen including weeds and flowers."

"There are number of simple ways to manage hay fever – managing allergic triggers, suppressing the symptoms, or altering the way your immune system responds to the pollen spores. Avoiding pollen allergens can be difficult though, as the tiny spores are windborne and travel for miles on air currents."

"Keeping windows closed can help, particularly in the early mornings when pollen is being released, and in the evening, when the air cools and pollen begins to fall to the ground, as can wearing wraparound sunglasses.

"A range of medication is available for hay fever sufferers including syrups – commonly used for children – tablets and nasal sprays which can help you breathe more easily and unblock your nose. Eye drops can also help to relieve itchy or watery eyes and certain eye drops should be used at least a couple of weeks before symptoms actually start, to minimise discomfort.

"There are a number of treatments available without a prescription and your [local pharmacy](#) will be able to advise you on an appropriate remedy," adds Lisa.

Selected branches of The Co-operative Pharmacy – which has over 700 branches across the UK – offer allergy checks. To find your nearest branch

visit:

<http://www.co-operative.coop/pharmacy/>

Hay fever facts (source, www.patient.co.uk)

Hay fever is also called seasonal allergic rhinitis because symptoms tend to occur at the same time, or in the same season, each year.

It affects 2 in 10 people in the United Kingdom.

Hay fever tends to run in families.

Those with asthma or eczema are more likely to develop hay fever and vice versa.

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Notes to Editors

The Co-operative Group stands apart from other major retailers in the UK as a business which is owned, not by a small group of shareholders, but by more than five million consumers. With core interests in food, financial services, travel, pharmacy, funerals and farms, it has an annual turnover of £14 billion, employs 123,000 staff and operates over 5,000 retail trading outlets handling more than 20 million weekly transactions.

Following the acquisition of the Somerfield supermarket chain in March 2009, The Co-operative Food is the fifth largest food retailer. The Co-operative Financial Services is one of the largest and most diversified financial mutual businesses, operating The Co-operative Bank, The Co-operative Insurance and Britannia.

The Co-operative is the UK's number one provider of funeral services, the third largest retail [pharmacy](#) chain, a leading travel retailer, supplying the travel needs of more than three million people annually, and is the UK's largest farmer.

Among its other businesses are The Co-operative Motor Group, The Co-operative Electrical Shop and The Co-operative Legal Services.

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