



Crown Heights Medical Centre—Patient's Newsletter

Crown Heights

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Wasps and stings

In the UK the commonest allergic reactions are caused by wasp stings. Most people do not have an allergic reaction to insect stings or bites. About 3 in 100 people who are stung have some kind of allergic reaction, but only in a few cases is the reaction severe. You do not get an allergic reaction after a first sting by a particular insect. You need one or more stings to sensitise your immune system. About 1 in 5 people who have an allergic response to a sting have no such reaction or a milder reaction when stung again. If you are stung or bitten by an insect, apply a cold compress to the area. Scrape out the sting left in the skin as quickly as possible using a fingernail. Paracetamol or ibuprofen will help any pain. Itching may continue for hours or days and can be relieved by antihistamine cream or tablets, which are available from a pharmacy. Steroid cream can also be used which is available without prescription from pharmacies. If the area becomes increasingly red it may be infected and you will need to contact a doctor. Symptoms of allergic reaction may be mild with swelling around the bite or sting, or may be severe with generalised swelling and redness in many parts of the body. Contact a doctor if the swelling is severe or ring 999 if becoming generally unwell usually within 10 minutes of the bite.



Hayfever

Hay fever is a type of [allergic rhinitis](#) caused by pollen or spores. Allergic rhinitis is a condition where an allergen (something that causes an allergic reaction) makes the inside of your nose inflamed



(swollen).

Hay fever affects the nose, sinuses (small air-filled cavities behind your cheekbones and forehead), throat and eyes. It causes:

- sneezing,
- a runny nose, and
- itchy eyes.

Practice Opening Hours

Monday to Thursday

08:00 to 19:30

Friday

07:30 to 18:30

Appointments before 8:00 a.m. and after 6:30 p.m. are by appointment only

www.crownheightsmedicalcentre.co.uk

Where can we find out more about the practice?

From this site, did you know that you can order prescriptions and make appointments on-line.

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Hay fever usually occurs in spring and summer, when there is more pollen in the air. Trees, grass and plants release pollen as part of their reproductive process. Mould and fungi also release tiny reproductive particles, called spores. People with hay fever can experience their symptoms at different times of the year, depending on which pollens or spores they are allergic to.

Allergic rhinitis can be classified as either intermittent or persistent, depending on how often people experience their symptoms (see box, left)

Allergic reaction

The symptoms of hay fever occur when the immune system (the body's defence system) over-reacts to a normally harmless substance, in this case pollen. When the body comes into contact with pollen, cells in the lining of the nose, mouth and eyes release a chemical called histamine. This triggers the symptoms of an allergic reaction.



How common is it?

Hay fever is a common condition that affects around 20% of people in the UK. Hay fever is more likely if there is a family history of allergies, particularly [asthma](#) or [eczema](#). In England, there may be over 10 million people with hay fever.

Outlook

Hay fever cannot be cured completely, but there are a number of treatments available to relieve the symptoms. These include antihistamine tablets, nasal (nose) sprays and eye drops. Some can only be prescribed by a GP, but many are available over-the-counter (OTC) in pharmacies.

For persistent hay fever, a treatment known as immunotherapy can be used to gradually increase a person's exposure to the allergen while monitoring their response. This can be effective at reducing the severity of an allergic reaction, but is not suitable for everyone.



What a waste

We felt that it would be worthwhile sharing some information with you regarding our practice. As you will be aware we are a large practice and in the 12 months up to 31st May 2010, we actually provided 107,000 patients with appointments. We did offer many more, however, 5,224 (5%) of our patients failed to arrive, 14,252 patients arrived late and 16,738 patients cancelled at relatively short notice.

What impact does it have on the practice?

In regard to the patients who failed to arrive, the majority of those appointments were wasted and would invariably require the patient to book again, for those who arrived late, this impacts on the patients who arrive after them and will contribute to the doctor or nurse running late and whilst we try to use the appointments which are cancelled at short notice, we often find that a significant amount cannot be filled as there is not enough time.

From time to time we do have greater demand than others and appointments become more scarce and sometimes it is difficult to get through to us quickly by telephone, but please spare a thought to consider that if you have to wait longer to see you own doctor than you would wish, it might just be due to waste and similarly if you experience delays getting through on the telephone, there might be some pressure being placed on the system through patients re-booking the appointments that they failed to attend.

A point to note is that over 7000 patients are now registered to make their appointments on-line and this number is growing quickly.

Everyone benefits from patients making on-line appointments as for those who have and can use the internet they can make appointment at any time and very quickly and for those who don't, there is less pressure on the telephone system so that they can get through more easily. More information from

www.crownheightsmedicalcentre.co.uk