

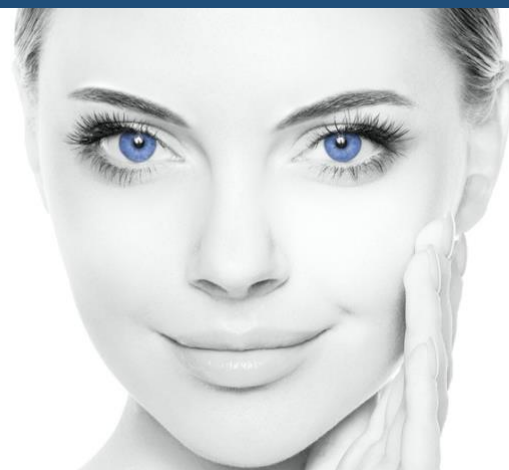


# The Eye Doctor Clinical InSights

## Allergy Season

### Topics in this issue >>>

- New product launch: Optimel Dry Eye Drops and Gel
- Year-round allergy management
- Acute Seasonal Conjunctivitis



## HAY FEVER FORECAST:

### Itchy eyes ahead 🌸 ⚙️ 👁️

Most of us are overly familiar with the streaming eyes, endless sneezing and congested sinuses that come paired with the Great British Summer, but what's not as well known is that Hay Fever can affect us all year round. Hay fever occurs when your immune system overreacts to an outdoor allergen. The most common allergens are pollens from wind-pollinated plants, such as trees, grass and weeds. The pollen from insect-pollinated plants are too heavy to remain airborne for long, and they're less likely to trigger an allergic reaction. Seasonal allergies are less common during the winter, but it's possible to experience an allergic reaction rhinitis year-round due to different plants emitting their respective pollens at different times of the year.

When it comes to allergic conjunctivitis, the part of the eye that is visible is not the area mainly affected. The cornea is not affected at all, and the surrounding 'white of the eye' is only slightly affected. The part that is not seen directly, a relatively large area that lies beneath the eyelids, is where the reaction mainly takes place. What is seen under the upper eyelid in allergic conjunctivitis is slight redness (hyperaemia), slight swelling (oedema) of the tissues, and sometimes a little bumpiness (papillary hyperplasia). This lack of major signs, coupled with the typical seasonal history and symptoms, is what helps to distinguish allergic conjunctivitis from other causes of conjunctivitis/inflammation such as infection. Perennial allergic conjunctivitis is caused in the same way, but is usually a reaction to house dust mite or pets in the indoor environment, rather than to seasonal pollens.

Good eyelid hygiene, cleaning dust & pollen from the lashes, drops to flush the eye and using a cold mask to cool the inflamed area, can at least help to alleviate some of the troubling symptoms.



### Andrew D Price

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### Effective treatments for Acute Seasonal Allergic Conjunctivitis

Normally at this time of year I am anticipating a change in the balance of patients in my 'Dry / Allergy Eye Clinics' – the percentage of patients reporting acute dry eye symptoms falls away a little as they find spending more time outside is helpful, at the same time there is an increase in ocular allergy patients with Seasonal Allergic Conjunctivitis (SAC) also known as Hay Fever Conjunctivitis. The onset of symptoms is normally associated with the seasonal production of allergens; tree pollen in spring, grass pollen in early summer, with weeds and fungal spores following up in late summer. I like to be in a position to immediately offer some relief of symptoms to these patients, anyone with an allergy will state they are anxious for the itch to go – now! The natural but actually counter-productive thought from the patient is to rub their eyes, this only makes matters worse, removing that temptation is paramount.

Sodium cromoglicate drops are widely and easily available, but these work ideally pre the onset of symptoms and most available are of the preserved variety, I don't want patients to have to wait many days for symptoms to subside whilst risking replacing their allergic response with a toxic reaction to the preservatives!

It has been shown, after controlled exposure to grass pollen, cold compress and artificial tears treatment showed a therapeutic effect on the signs and symptoms of allergic conjunctivitis'. Therefore with The Eye Doctor Allergy in stock I supply this for use every 4 hours and tell the patient to alternate with The Eye Doctor Daily Refresh Eye Drops (non-preserved) for use every 4 hours or more frequently if needed.

This has a number of beneficial effects on the ocular surface; cooling, vasoconstricting and flushing allergens away. Also vitally important to advise the patient to avoid allergen exposure!

Treating eye allergy is a natural extension of the eye care we are all currently providing, we can and should be helping these patients, in the same way we are for dry eye, both are ocular surface conditions, in 2022 leaving them to self-select drops off the retail shelves that may or may not help after a period time when their need is immediate is below the standard of care we aspire to.

### Dr Fayyaz Musa Consultant Eye Surgeon

### Ocular Allergies

Itchy eyes at particular times of in the year could indicate that your eyes may be sensitive to allergens in the environment at that time. Up to 15% of people can experience allergic conjunctivitis. It is usually seasonal and dependent on the pollens being released and the time. Some people have itchy eyes most of the year and this is usually due to domestic allergens such as pets and fabric fibres.

In either case, the eyes can become uncomfortable, red, watery and the vision blurred. The allergens react with immune cells on the eyes surface and release histamine, a molecule that causes blood vessels to get inflamed.

In terms of treatment, for mild conditions, a cold compress will usually suffice. In moderate cases, Anti histamine drops are very useful at reducing itchiness and redness. In severe conditions, steroid eye drops and cyclosporine drops are required to bring the condition under control.

Lubricating eye drops can be used alongside these other medications to provide comfort.

If you would like to feature as a guest speaker in our next newsletter, please contact Zerqa Mailk, Optical Director at The Body Doctor: [zerqa.mailk@the-body-doctor.com](mailto:zerqa.mailk@the-body-doctor.com)

### Dr.

### Colin Parsloe

Ophthalmologist

### How can Optimel help patients with allergies?

Up to 40% of the population will know the red puffy swollen itchy eyes they get with allergic eye disease. This comes in many forms from a mild itch lasting for a few days to a potentially blinding conditions especially in young children.

With Optimel, we now have access to the most amazing eye drop for allergies. Manuka plant extract is a natural product used for hundreds of years by the New Zealand Maori population to treat burns and skin disease(1). In the mid-1980s professor Peter Molan discovered a unique chemical in Manuka honey giving it a distinct advantage over other honeys. Manuka honey is not just a 'natural therapy'. It has been approved for Clinical use by multiple countries including Europe and the USA. The Food and Drug Administration has recognised Manuka as a therapy for damage to the skin(2).

Optimel is a good lubricant and will wash allergy containing products from the eye. It is however significantly more potent as it contains manuka honey extract. This has been clinically proven to change the body's immune system resulting in less inflammation and to reduce swelling(3). There is scientific evidence showing that manuka honey has a nutritional action allowing increased healing of damaged epithelium cells (4).

Your option in the first step of treatment could be to use a standard lubricant to wash out allergy containing elements. However Optimel offers far more scientifically proven natural power. It will work on the inflammation and swelling caused by allergy containing elements. It will also help the regeneration of damaged tissue, all in one drop and without a doctor's visit or prescription.

- (1)New Zealand Manuka Group (2022). *The History of Manuka*.
- (2) FDA (2022). *Wound dressing with Manuka Honey*.
- (3) Niaz K et al (2017). *Health Benefits of Manuka Honey as an Essential Constituent for Tissue Regeneration*
- (4) Niaz K et al (2017). *Health Benefits of Manuka Honey as an Essential Constituent for Tissue Regeneration*



Show me the *honey!* 🐝



CELEBRATING 10 YEARS IN EYE CARE

