

Quay Points

The Patient Newsletter for East Quay Medical Centre

Spring 2025



Hay Fever

Hay fever is a common allergy that causes sneezing, coughing and itchy eyes. You cannot cure it, but there are things you can do to help your symptoms, or medicines you can take to help.

Check if you have hay fever

Symptoms of hay fever include:

- sneezing and coughing
- a runny or blocked nose
- itchy, red or watery eyes
- itchy throat, mouth, nose and ears
- loss of smell
- pain around the sides of your head and your forehead
- headache
- feeling tired

Symptoms are usually worse between late March and September, especially when it's warm, humid and windy. This is when the pollen count is at its highest.

Hay fever can last for weeks or months, unlike a cold, which usually goes away after 1 to 2 weeks.

How to treat hay fever yourself

There's currently no cure for hay fever and you cannot prevent it. But you can do things to ease your symptoms when the pollen count is high.

DO

- ✓ put petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline) around your nostrils to trap pollen
- ✓ wear wraparound sunglasses, a mask or a wide-brimmed hat to stop pollen getting into your nose and eyes
- ✓ shower and change your clothes after you have been outside to wash pollen off
- ✓ keep windows and doors shut as much as possible
- ✓ vacuum regularly and dust with a damp cloth
- ✓ try to use a pollen filter in the air vents of your car, if you have one, and a HEPA filter in your vacuum cleaner

DON'T

- × do not cut grass or walk on grass
- × do not spend too much time outside
- × do not keep fresh flowers in the house
- × do not smoke or be around smoke – it makes your symptoms worse
- × do not dry clothes outside – they can catch pollen
- × do not let pets into the house if possible – they can carry pollen indoors

A pharmacist can help with hay fever

Speak to a pharmacist if you have hay fever. They can give you advice and suggest the best treatments to help with symptoms, such as:

- antihistamine drops, tablets or nasal sprays
- steroid nasal sprays

Some antihistamines can make you very sleepy, so speak to your pharmacist about non-drowsy antihistamines if you need to.

[Find out more about hay fever and allergic rhinitis from Allergy UK](#)

See a GP if:

- your symptoms are getting worse
- your symptoms do not improve after taking medicines from the pharmacy

Treatments for hay fever from a GP

The GP might prescribe a steroid treatment if you have hay fever.

If steroids and other hay fever treatments do not work, the GP may refer you for immunotherapy.

This means you'll be given small amounts of pollen as an injection or tablet to slowly build up your immunity to pollen.

This kind of treatment usually starts a few months before the hay fever season begins. Immunotherapy is a specialist service that may not be available everywhere.

Causes of hay fever

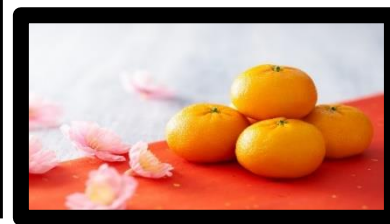
Hay fever is an allergic reaction to the fine powder that plants produce, called pollen, usually when it comes into contact with your mouth, nose, eyes and throat.

[Find out more about the pollen forecast from the Met Office](#)

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever/>



Vitamins and minerals – are you getting what you need?



What are vitamins and minerals?

Vitamins and minerals are essential nutrients and are also known as micronutrients. They are needed in much smaller amounts in our diet than other nutrients such as [carbohydrates](#), [protein](#), and [fat](#).

We can't make vitamins and minerals in our body so we must get them from our diet. There are a couple of exceptions, such as vitamin D, which we can make in our skin when exposed to sunlight.

How do I get enough vitamins and minerals?

A varied and balanced diet with the right proportions of foods from the main food groups, should provide enough vitamins and minerals (with the exception of vitamin D) to meet the needs of most people.

To achieve a healthy, balanced diet, the government's [Eatwell Guide](#) shows us how much of what we eat should come from each food group.

Do I need to take vitamin or mineral supplements?

Generally, we should be able to get all the vitamins and minerals we need by eating a healthy and varied diet.

Supplements are not a substitute for a healthy diet. This is because whole foods provide lots of other dietary components such as [fibre](#), which helps maintain gut health and reduces the risk of some diseases.

However, the government recommends some people should take supplements:

- **Folic acid:** Women who are pregnant or trying to conceive, should take a daily folic acid supplement of 400µg (microgram) until 12 weeks of pregnancy.
- **Vitamin D:** Adults and children above 5 years old should consider taking a daily 10µg (microgram) vitamin D supplement during the autumn and winter months. This helps to protect bone and muscle health.
- People who are not able to go outside often, or who cover their skin while outside, should take a daily 10µg (microgram) vitamin D supplement all year round.
- People with dark skin, for example from a South Asian, African or African-Caribbean background, should take a daily 10µg (microgram) vitamin D supplement all year round.
- **Vitamins A, C and D:** All children aged 6 months to 5 years should be given a vitamin supplement containing vitamins A, C and D every day.
- Babies who exclusively breastfed should be given a daily vitamin D supplement from birth. However, babies who have more than 500ml of infant formula a day, should not be given any vitamin supplements because formula is fortified with vitamins A, C and D as well as other nutrients.

Speak to [your GP](#) if you think you're not getting enough vitamins and minerals from your diet. Your GP can advise you and make sure you don't choose supplements which affect any medication you're taking.

You should always buy your supplements from a reputable retailer. You should always read the label and stick to the recommended dose.

Can I get the vitamins and minerals I need from a vegetarian or vegan diet?

A well-planned vegetarian or vegan diet can provide most of the nutrients we need. However, it can be more difficult to get enough of some of the vitamins and minerals we need from just plant-based foods.

If you are considering a vegetarian or vegan diet, here are some tips to make sure you're getting enough of the below nutrients:

- **Vitamin B12:** If you follow a vegan diet, you should eat foods that are fortified with vitamin B12. You may wish to take a vitamin B12 supplement.
- **Iron:** Plant-based sources of iron, such as beans and wholemeal bread, provide iron that is less available than that which is provided by meat.
- **Calcium:** Some plant-based sources of calcium include fortified dairy alternatives, kale, bread, and tofu.
- **Iodine:** Milk and milk products are the main source of iodine in our diets. Some plant-based milk alternatives (such as oat and soya drinks) are fortified with iodine, but it is important to check the label.
- **Vitamin D:** Plant-based sources of vitamin D include fortified foods and some plant-based dairy alternatives. You may wish to take a vitamin D supplement but check the label to ensure they are suitable for vegans.

For more information read our [pages on healthy vegetarian and vegan diets](#).

<https://www.nutritional.org.uk/nutritional-information/vitamins-and-minerals/>



VITAMINS AND MINERALS CHART - Your guide to the essential vitamins and minerals for a healthy life

Vitamins	What it does	Food Source	Mineral	What it does	Food Source
Vitamin A	Vitamin A prevents eye problems, promotes a healthy immune system, is essential for the growth and development of cells and keeps skin healthy.	Milk, eggs, liver, fortified cereals, darkly coloured orange or green vegetables (carrots, sweet potatoes and pumpkin), orange fruits such as cantaloupe, apricots, peaches, papayas and mangoes.	Calcium	Vital for building strong bones and teeth. The time to build strong bones is during childhood and the teen years, to fight against bone loss later in life. Weak bones are susceptible to osteoporosis, causing bones to break easily.	Milk and other dairy products – such as yoghurt, cheese and cottage cheese – are good sources of calcium. Also broccoli and dark green, leafy vegetables soy foods and foods fortified with calcium.
Vitamin C (ascorbic acid)	Vitamin C is needed to form collagen, tissue that holds cells together. It's essential for healthy bones, teeth, gums and blood vessels. It helps the body absorb iron and calcium and contributes to brain function.	You'll find high levels of vitamin C in red berries, kiwi, red and green capsicums, tomatoes, broccoli, spinach and juices made from guava, grapefruit and oranges.	Iron	Iron helps red blood cells carry oxygen to all parts of the body. Symptoms of iron-deficiency anaemia include weakness and fatigue, lightheadedness and shortness of breath.	Iron-rich foods include red meat, pork, fish and shellfish, poultry, lentils, beans and soy foods, green leafy vegetables and raisins. Some flours, cereals and grain products are also fortified with iron.
Vitamin D	Vitamin D strengthens bones because it helps the body absorb bone-building calcium.	This vitamin is unique – your body manufactures it when you get sunlight on your skin. Vitamin D is also found in egg yolks, fish oils and fortified foods like milk.	Magnesium	Magnesium helps muscles and nerves function, steadies the heart rhythm, and keeps bones strong. It also helps the body create energy and make proteins.	You get magnesium from whole grains and whole grain breads, nuts and seeds, green leafy vegetables, potatoes, beans, avocados, bananas, kiwi, broccoli, prawns and chocolate.
Vitamin E	Vitamin E is an antioxidant and helps protect cells from damage. It is also important for the health of red blood cells.	Vitamin E is found in many foods, such as vegetable oils, nuts and green leafy vegetables. Avocados, wheat germ and whole grains are also good sources.	Phosphorus	Phosphorus helps form healthy bones and teeth. It also helps the body make energy. It is part of every cell membrane and every cell in the body needs phosphorus to function normally.	Phosphorus is found in most foods, but the best sources are dairy foods, meat and fish.
Vitamin B12	Vitamin B12 helps to make red blood cells and is important for nerve cell function.	Vitamin B12 is found naturally in fish, red meat, poultry, milk, cheese and eggs. It's also added to some breakfast cereals.	Potassium	Potassium helps with muscle and nervous system function. It also helps the body maintain the balance of water in the blood and body tissues.	Potassium is found in broccoli, potatoes (with skins), green leafy vegetables, citrus fruits, bananas, dried fruits and legumes such as peas and lima beans.
Vitamin B6	Vitamin B6 is important for normal brain and nerve function. It also helps the body break down proteins and make red blood cells.	A wide variety of foods contain vitamin B6, including potatoes, bananas, beans, seeds, nuts, red meat, poultry, fish, eggs, spinach and fortified cereals.	Zinc	Zinc is important for normal growth, strong immunity and wound healing.	You'll find zinc in red meat, poultry, oysters and other seafood, nuts, dried beans, soy foods, milk and other dairy products, whole grains and fortified breakfast cereals.
Thiamin (vitamin B1)	Thiamin helps the body convert carbohydrates into energy and is necessary for the heart, muscles and nervous system to function properly.	People get thiamin from many different foods, including fortified breads, cereals and pasta, meat and fish, dried beans, soy foods and peas and whole grains like wheat germ.			
Niacin (vitamin B3)	Niacin helps the body turn food into energy. It helps maintain healthy skin and is important for nerve function.	You'll find niacin in red meat, poultry, fish, fortified hot and cold cereals and peanuts.			
Riboflavin (vitamin B2)	Riboflavin is essential for turning carbohydrates into energy and producing red blood cells. It is also important for vision.	Some of the best sources of riboflavin are meat, eggs, legumes (like peas and lentils), nuts, dairy products, green leafy vegetables, broccoli, asparagus and fortified cereals.			
Folate (vitamin B9) Folic acid or folacin)	Folate helps the body make red blood cells. It is also needed to make DNA.	Dried beans and other legumes, green leafy vegetables, asparagus, oranges and other citrus fruits, and poultry are good sources of this vitamin. So are fortified or enriches bread, noodles and cereals.			

Are you travelling abroad this summer?

If you plan to travel outside the UK, you may need to be vaccinated against some of the serious diseases in other parts of the world.

Vaccinations are available to protect you against infections such as yellow fever, typhoid and hepatitis A.

In the UK, the NHS routine immunisation (vaccination) schedule protects you against a number of diseases but does not cover all of the infectious diseases found overseas.

Changes to service at East Quay Medical Centre.

The main change to our service is that we are unable to provide a service for any non- NHS vaccines at the current time. However, not to worry! You can still get your much needed travel vaccines from other providers. The easiest option for you to get your travel vaccinations now would be to visit a comprehensive travel service, as they will be able to do all of your vaccinations at once. Some providers include:

- Boots Pharmacy
- Superdrug Pharmacy
- Bath Travel Clinic (NOMAD)
- Masta Travel Health

You can find other providers by searching online or phoning around to pharmacies.

We know it is far from ideal, and we apologise for making this a little harder. While we can still offer travel advice and NHS vaccines, we can't provide the full service of all vaccines needed due to some not being NHS funded and because we need to focus all of our resources on medical needs due to unprecedented demand and need post-covid, also due to pressures already within the NHS. Rest assured; we can however provide you with an overview of your immunisation history if this is needed by the travel vaccination service that you go to. You will just need to let us know.

Which travel vaccines do I need?

Some countries require proof of vaccination (for example, for polio or yellow fever vaccination), which must be documented on an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP) before you enter or when you leave a country.

Not all travel vaccinations are available free on the NHS, even if they're recommended for travel to a certain area.

Other non-NHS travel vaccines will be charged.

You'll have to pay for travel vaccinations against:

- hepatitis B
- Japanese encephalitis
- meningitis vaccines
- rabies
- tick-borne encephalitis
- tuberculosis (TB)
- yellow fever

Yellow fever vaccines are only available from designated centres.

The cost of travel vaccines that are not available on the NHS will vary, depending on the vaccine and number of doses you need. It's worth considering this when budgeting for your trip.

Which travel vaccines are free?

The following travel vaccines are available free on the NHS if your GP practice is signed up to provide vaccination (immunisation) services.

- polio (given as a combined diphtheria/tetanus/polio jab)
- typhoid
- hepatitis A

These vaccines are free because they protect against diseases thought to represent the greatest risk to public health if they were brought into the country.

How do I stay healthy on my trip?

Water

Diseases can be caught from drinking contaminated water, or swimming in it.

Unless you know the water, supply is safe where you are staying,

ONLY USE (in order of preference)

1. Boiled water
2. Bottled water or canned drinks
3. Water treated by a sterilising agent.

This includes water used to make ice cubes in drinks and water for cleaning your teeth

Swimming

It is safer to swim in water that is well chlorinated. If you are travelling to Africa, South America or some parts of the Caribbean, avoid swimming in freshwater lakes and streams. You can catch a parasitic disease called schistosomiasis from such places. This disease is also known as Bilharzia. It is also wise never to go barefoot, but to wear protective footwear when out, even on the beach. Other diseases can be caught from sand and soil, particularly wet soil.

Personal Hygiene

Many diseases are transmitted by what is known as the 'faecal-oral' route. To help prevent this, always wash your hands with soap and clean water after going to the toilet, before eating and before handling food. Using hand gel is another sensible option.

Insect Bites

Mosquitoes, certain types of flies, ticks and bugs can cause many different diseases. e.g. malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever. Some bite at night, but some during daytime so protection is always needed.

Avoid being bitten by:

- Cover up skin as much as possible if going out at night (mosquitoes that transmit malaria bite from dusk until dawn). Wear loose fitting clothes, long sleeves, trousers or long skirts.
- Use insect repellents on exposed skin. (DEET containing products are the most effective. A content of up to 50% DEET is recommended for tropical destinations). Clothes can be sprayed with repellents too or clothing specific sprays. Check suitability for children on the individual products. If using sunscreen always apply first, followed by an insect repellent spray on top.
- If room is not air conditioned, but is screened, close shutters early evening and spray room with knockdown insecticide spray. In malarious regions, if camping, or sleeping in unprotected accommodation, always sleep under a mosquito net (impregnated with permethrin). Avoid camping near areas of stagnant water, these are common breeding areas for mosquitoes etc.
- Electric insecticide vaporisers are very effective as long as there are no power failures!
- There is no scientific evidence that electric buzzers, savoury yeast extract, tea tree oil, bath oils, garlic and vitamin B are effective.
- Homeopathic and herbal medications should NEVER be used as an alternative to conventional measures for malaria prevention.

How to stay safe on my travels

Personal safety and security

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) provide excellent information about this. They have information for many different types of travel and also advise on travel to specific destinations in times of political unrest and natural disasters. Please go to their website for more information at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office>

Insurance cover

- Take out adequate insurance cover for your trip. This should possibly include medical repatriation as without it, this service is extremely expensive if needed.
- If you have any pre existing medical conditions, make sure you inform the insurance company of these details and check the small print of the policy thoroughly.
- If you travel to a European Union country, make sure you have obtained an EHIC card before you travel which takes some time to obtain. Further information about the EHIC is found at <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/Pages/Applyingandrenewing.aspx>
- Please note, additional travel insurance is still advised even if you have an EHIC card

Air Travel

It is sensible on any long haul flight to be comfortable in your seat. Exercise your legs, feet and toes while sitting every half an hour or so and take short walks whenever feasible. Upper body and breathing exercises can further improve circulation. Drink plenty of water and be sensible about alcohol intake which in excess leads to dehydration. Further information can be obtained from the websites detailed at the end of this leaflet with more specific advice and information on travel-related deep vein thrombosis.

Sun and Heat

Sunburn and heat-stroke cause serious problems in travellers but in the long term can be a serious cause of skin cancer. There is no such thing as a safe suntan, but the following advice should be taken:

Precautionary guidelines

- Increase sun exposure gradually, with a 20-minute limit initially.
- Use sun blocks which contain both UVA and UVB protection and sufficient sun protection factor (SPF) and a minimum of SPF 15. Children under 3 years should have a minimum of SPF 25 and babies under 6 months should be kept out of the sun at all times. Reapply often and always after swimming and washing. Read manufacturer instructions
- Always apply sunscreen first followed by an insect repellent spray on top
- Wear protective clothing – sunhats, T shirts and sunglasses etc.
- Avoid going out between 11am - 3pm, when the sun's rays are strongest
- Take special care of children and those with pale skin/red hair
- Drink extra fluids in a hot climate – be aware alcohol can make you dehydrated

Enjoy your vacation!



Angela had no symptoms when she received her routine screening invitation, so was shocked to find out she had grade 1 breast cancer.

Now fully recovered, she's passionate about encouraging other women to attend their appointment.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/2025/02/19/south-west-patients-and-nhs-staff-urge-women-to-come-forward-for-their-breast-screening-appointment/>



"You might feel reluctant to have your mammogram, but it's the most important thing you can do for your health.

Mine took a few minutes and saved my life"



Your next poo could save your life. Detecting bowel cancer at the earliest stage makes you up to nine times more likely to survive.

If you're sent a bowel cancer screening kit, put it by the loo. Don't put it off.

www.nhs.uk/bowel-screening



Finding bowel cancer early makes it easier to treat

The NHS bowel cancer screening kit can detect signs of cancer before you notice anything is wrong.



There's an upcoming group on the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme.



Venue: Victoria Park Community Centre



Date: Tuesday 25th March



Time: Confirm on registration

Sessions take place on the same day and time each week and will cover a range of different topics. This will include healthy eating, physical exercise a long-term behaviour change classes, to help you build a healthier lifestyle.

If this date and time suits you then you can head to our website to refer and book your sessions:



<https://preventing-diabetes.co.uk/welcome/groups/>

Or you can contact us for more information:



info@preventing-diabetes.co.uk



0333 577 3010.

Prostate cancer

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men

Prostate cancer usually develops slowly, so there may be no signs for many years.

However, the chances of developing prostate cancer increase as you get older. Most cases develop in men aged 50 or older and prostate cancer is more common in black men.

If something in your body doesn't feel right, contact your GP practice, or find more information on prostate cancer.

<https://www.nhs.uk/condition/prostate-cancer/>

Prostate cancer

NHS



The **symptoms of prostate cancer** usually develop slowly, but may include:

NHS



The chances of developing prostate cancer **increase as you get older**. Most cases develop in men aged 50 or older.

NHS



- an increased need to pee
- straining while you pee
- a feeling that your bladder has not fully emptied

NHS



These symptoms can be caused by other things too, but they shouldn't be ignored.

NHS



Prostate cancer is **more common in black men**. It's also more common in men whose father or brother have been affected.

NHS



If something in your body doesn't feel right, and you're worried it could be cancer, **contact your GP practice**



The fear of judgement can take hold when taking those first step back into getting active – it’s completely normal to feel that way.

Our friends at Mind share their top tips for building your confidence back up.



BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Sometimes we can't be as active as we might like to be - our energy levels will vary on different days. It's fine to slow down or take a break, pace yourself.

- Mind



KEEP TRYING

It may take a while to find an activity you like, and it's good to try different activities out. But you may also find that you prefer a certain class, instructor, or place to do an activity.

- Mind



WORK WITH YOUR HIGHS AND LOWS

Some days are good and others are not so good. Let yourself have a break if you need it, and start again once you feel better.

- Mind



TRY NOT TO COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS

Set your own goals based on your abilities and what you want to achieve. It can be tricky but try to focus on how you're feeling rather than what other people are doing.

- Mind



CHANGE WHO YOU DO ACTIVITY WITH

Whether you've been getting active on your own and want to share it with others, or don't feel comfortable doing it in a group - it's ok to change who you're active with, if that makes it more enjoyable for you.

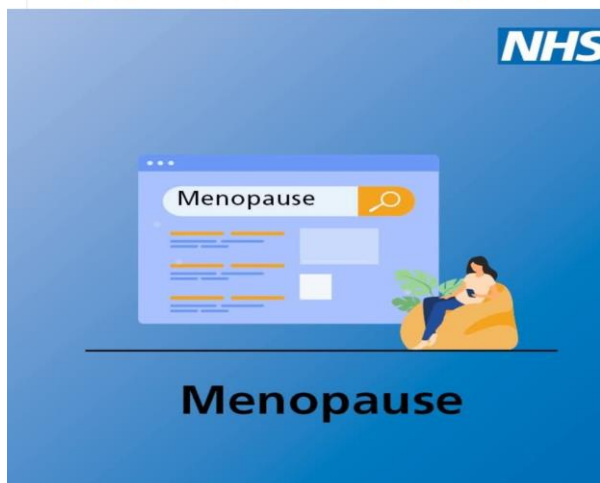
- Mind

Menopause symptoms can be severe and have a significant impact on everyday activities - but there are ways to alleviate and manage them.

Find out more about symptoms and treatment options for you.



<https://nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>



Itching for some stitching? Whatever helps you beat those cravings, you can get some extra help from our quit tools.



Ways to quit smoking

Crochet like it's going out of fashion



Craft a Personal Quit Plan on the NHS Quit Smoking website



OPENING HOURS

MONDAY 9am – 6pm
TUESDAY 9am-6pm
WEDNESDAY 9am-6pm
THURSDAY 9am-6pm
FRIDAY 9am-6pm
SATURDAY – CLOSED
SUNDAY – CLOSED

PLEASE AVOID BETWEEN 1PM – 2PM



Our surgery details:
East Quay Medical Centre
Esat Quay
Bridgwater
TA6 4GP

Reception 01278 444666
Prescriptions 01278 446006

www.eastquaymedicalcentre.com

- Onsite Opticians: 01278 440440
- Onsite Pharmacy: 01278 423015
- Onsite Dentist: 01278 411141

Disabled parking bays located at the Front of the surgery

Please remember when parking in the surgery car park that the yellow disabled parking bays are only to be used by blue badge holders.

The bays are **NOT** for dropping off, or to be parked in without displaying a blue badge.

Not all disabilities are visible but please respect the people who do park in these parking bays who are blue badge holders .

Thank you

East Quay Vision

We're now providing
**FREE
HEARING
ASSESSMENTS**



Here at East Quay Vision, we are delighted to announce that we will now be running an additional clinic every week. Clinics will run on a Monday and a Friday. Offering you a wide range of hearing services, including **FREE** full hearing assessments, with our partners **The Hearing Care Partnership**.

Our audiologist will be on hand to provide you with expert advice, no matter what your hearing concern is, so why not book your **FREE** hearing assessment today? Call the team on 01278 440440 to book your appointment now!