

NEWSLETTER

Malta Medicines Authority

SEASONAL SNEE...ZES! ACHOO...



What causes seasonal allergies?

Seasonal allergies affect millions of people and occur when the body reacts to pollen. Symptoms can resemble a cold lasting more than a week, including sneezing, coughing, a runny or blocked nose, and itchy, watery eyes. In more severe cases, pollen can also trigger asthma.

Seasonal allergies often run in families. If your parents or siblings have them, you're more likely to develop them as well.

What can I do to relief symptoms?

- Save outdoor activities for late afternoon
- Wear a mask
- Keep your windows closed when pollen counts are high
- Wear glasses to help keep pollen out of your eyes
- Have a shower and change your clothes after being outdoors
- Brush off your furry friends after they've been outdoors

Which medicines can I take?



Sneezing

Nasal sprays,
antihistamines



Watery eyes

Antihistamines



Itching

Antihistamines,
creams



Runny or
blocked nose

Nasal sprays,
decongestants



Coughing

Cough
medicines

IMPORTANT NOTE

**Before using any medicines consult your
pharmacist and/or doctor**

PreP and PEP medicines

What are PreP and PEP used for?

PreP and PEP are medicines to prevent HIV, which is a lifelong virus that weakens the immune system, promoting the development of serious infections and cancers.

Are they available in Malta?

Yes. Since the end of January 2026, these medicines are free of charge for anyone who may have been exposed to HIV.

How can I access these medicines?

Both PEP and PreP have to be prescribed by a doctor. PreP is prescribed by a specialist after a consultation. PEP is prescribed after a hospital emergency consultation.



PreP

Pre-exposure at high-risk of getting HIV

Long-term use

Injection or tablets

PEP

Post-exposure of possible infection (starting within 72h)

Emergency only

Tablets

What should I do if I have been potentially exposed to HIV?

Go to the emergency room right away, not exceeding 72h. Exposure might happen as follows:

1. The condom broke during sex with a person who might be HIV- positive
2. Possibly an infected needlestick injury
3. Sexual assault
4. Unprotected sex

IMPORTANT NOTE

PreP and PEP are not used to treat HIV after a diagnosis has been confirmed. Individuals who are diagnosed with HIV require a different treatment approach, known as HAART.

For more info visit



<https://sexualhealth.gov.mt/sexual-health-topic/hiv-aids/>



Upcoming ...

In the next issue, we will explain another HIV therapy called HAART.

Epinephrine injections



It is a prefilled injection used to treat severe allergic reactions to food, medications, or insect stings, that can be life-threatening.

When is it needed?

The patient carries it and uses it as a quick, life-saving response during an emergency reaction.

How can I access it?

It is prescribed by a doctor, who also explains how to use it as a preventive measure for patients at high risk of severe allergic reactions. As of January 2026, the NHS is providing 2 epinephrine injections to entitled patients free of charge. These injections have a prompt (rapid) effect, helping to quickly counteract severe allergic reactions and prevent symptoms from worsening.

Having 2 injections is important for safety, as one serves as a backup (reserve) in case the first dose fails.

What is paracetamol?

Paracetamol is a medication used to reduce pain and fever.

How can I get it?

It is available in pharmacies as pills, syrups, suppositories, and others. It can be purchased over-the-counter or with a prescription.



Is it safe for children?

Yes. There are specific formulations for kids. Consult a doctor and/or pharmacist before giving paracetamol to children since the dose depends on the weight.

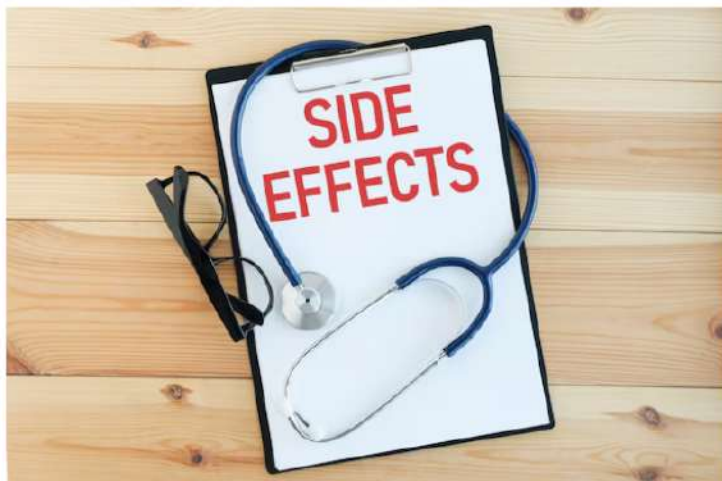
Is it safe for pregnancy and breastfeeding?

Yes. There is no evidence showing that using paracetamol during pregnancy or breastfeeding increases the risk of autism, ADHD, or intellectual disability in children.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Do not exceed the maximum daily dose of 4g of paracetamol for adults. Consult a pharmacist/doctor to confirm the correct dose for you to avoid serious side effects.

Medicines: Reporting side effects



A side effect is an unwanted or undesirable effect that happens when taking a medication or treatment.

Why report?

The information you provide helps the Authority assess whether the side effect might be related to the medication. Your report helps the Authority keep medicines safer for everyone. It is not always possible to identify rare side effects before a medicine is available on the market.

Who can report and how?

Everyone can report a suspected reaction.

If you experience a side effect that is not listed in the leaflet, report it to the pharmacist/doctor, or fill in the form on the MMA website by scanning the QR code and following the instructions for patients and consumers.



What can I report?

Reports can be made only for medicines. Cosmetics and food supplements do not fall under this category.

IMPORTANCE NOTE

If you're unsure whether to report a side effect, you can contact your doctor/pharmacist, or any healthcare professional who can guide and help you.

Upcoming ...

In the next issue, we will explain how to report an incident related to the use of a medical device.



FOR MORE INFO...

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Cannabis for research and medicinal purposes queries

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Shortages of medicines

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Product defect report link

<https://medicinesauthority.gov.mt/form-details?surID=39&cat=3>

Pharmacy queries

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Academy educational courses information

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