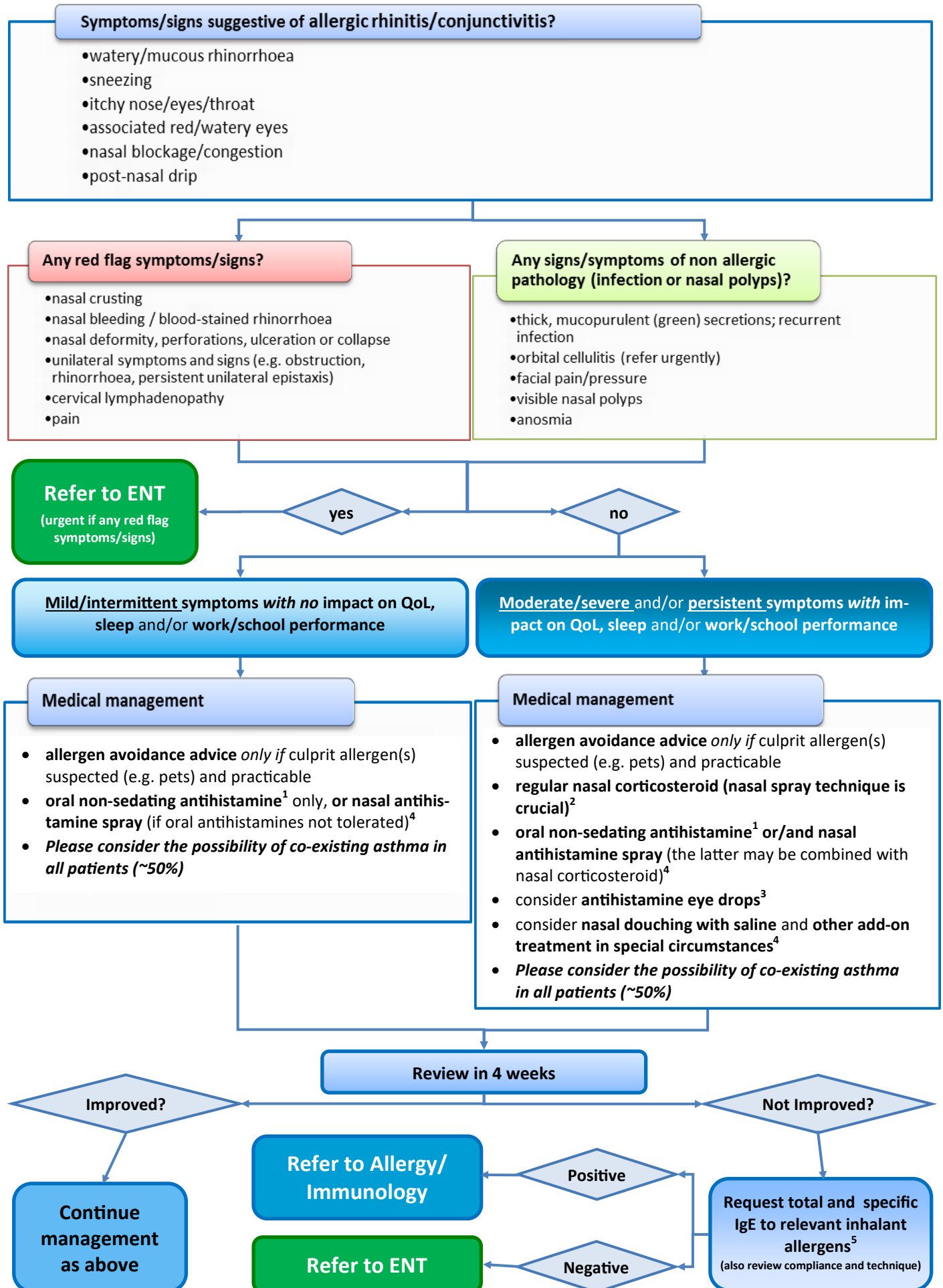


RHINITIS/RHINOCONJUNCTIVITIS

Referral and Management Pathway for Primary Care



NOTES

Note 1 — Oral non-sedating antihistamines (this list is not exhaustive)

- **Cetirizine once daily** - cost-effective 1st line; available OTC
- **Loratadine once daily** - cost-effective alternative; available OTC
- **Fexofenadine once daily** - suitable alternative if above do not lead to symptom relief, also available OTC
- Loratadine or cetirizine are the preferred choices during pregnancy and lactation
- DO NOT use sedating antihistamines (such as chlorphenamine)

Note 2 — Nasal corticosteroids sprays

- **Fluticasone furoate, fluticasone propionate or mometasone furoate**
- Examples of combined nasal sprays with corticosteroid and antihistamine are:
 - **fluticasone propionate and azelastine** *or*
 - **mometasone furoate and olopatadine**
- Give **education** regarding **nasal spray technique** (see BSACI information sheet, available at : <http://www.bsaci.org/Guidelines/SOPs> (accessed Apr 2023))
- Advise the **need for regular treatment** (clinical improvement may not be apparent for a few days and maximal effect may not be apparent until after 2 weeks). Starting treatment 2 weeks before a known allergen season improves efficacy
- Please note: some corticosteroids, available as spray or drop formulations (e.g. budesonide, beclomethasone, betamethasone) have moderate/high systemic bioavailability; the latter two can be considered if associated chronic rhinosinusitis and nasal polyposis

Note 3 — Antihistamine eye drops

- **Antihistamine eye drops** (with additional mast cell stabilising properties), e.g. ketotifen, olopatadine, azelastine, are useful choices with convenient dosing regimen (twice daily)
- Lodoxamide, sodium cromoglycate and nedocromil eye drops are mast cell stabilisers only - would not be as effective as options above.

Note 4 — Add-on treatment in special circumstances

- Significant watery rhinorrhoea → **ipratropium bromide** nasal spray
- Concomitant asthma → **montelukast** tablets
- If topical antihistamine preferred (e.g. drowsiness on oral antihistamines) → **azelastine nasal spray**, or **in combination with nasal steroid** → fluticasone propionate and azelastine, mometasone and olopatadine (see Note 2)
- Patients requiring rapid resolution of severe symptoms in exceptional circumstances → consider add-on 5- to 7-day course of prednisolone, 20–40 mg a day
- **Nasal douching with saline** is also a useful add-on, particularly for patients with moderate/severe symptoms
- Sympathomimetic decongestants should be avoided as long term use can cause rebound congestion (*rhinitis medicamentosa*);

Note 5 — Specific IgE to common inhalant allergens

- house dust mites
- relevant animal dander (e.g. cat, dog, other animals)
- grass pollen
- birch pollen

Please note: these tests are required in order to decide the appropriate specialty to refer to (if Allergy → specific immunotherapy with relevant allergens will be considered)

Additional Information on Rhinitis

- Rhinitis is defined as having two or more of a) nasal blockage, b) anterior/posterior rhinorrhoea and c) sneezing/nasal itch, for ≥ 1h/day for ≥2 weeks
- Allergic rhinitis (with or without conjunctivitis) is common and affects >20% of the UK population
- Non-allergic rhinitis has a multifactorial aetiology; usually responds to treatment with steroids; may be a presenting complaint of systemic disorders (e.g. Churg-Strauss syndrome, Wegener's granulomatosis, sarcoidosis)
- **Asthma and rhinitis frequently co-exist**, with symptoms of rhinitis found in ~75-80% of patients with asthma, and asthma found in ~50% of patients with rhinitis

See also BSACI primary care guideline on rhinitis: www.bsaci.org/guidelines/bsaci-guidelines/rhinitis-2017-update/

Based on:

1. BSACI guideline for the diagnosis and management of allergic and non-allergic rhinitis (revised edition 2017). Clin Exp Allergy. 2017;47:856-889
2. BSACI Primary Care Guideline—Management of allergic and non allergic rhinitis: www.bsaci.org/guidelines/bsaci-guidelines/rhinitis-2017-update
3. Allergic Rhinitis and its Impact on Asthma (ARIA) guidelines – 2016 revision. J Allergy Clin Immunol. 2017;140:950-8
4. Clinical Practice Guideline: Allergic Rhinitis Executive Summary – American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head And Neck Surgery Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery 2015;152(2): 197-206
5. BSACI Nasal spray SOP, available at <https://www.bsaci.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Nasal-corticosteroid-SOP-1.pdf>. Accessed Oct 2023