

Self care

Did you know that 10 of the most minor ailments seen by GPs can also be treated by you at home?

By treating yourself at home you could save a trip to the surgery and free up time for the GPs to see patients with more serious health problems.

Read about some of the most effective home treatments on the NHS website for:

1. Back pain
2. Dermatitis
3. Heartburn and indigestion
4. Nasal congestion (blocked nose)
5. Constipation
6. Migraines
7. Coughs
8. Acne
9. Sprains and strains
10. Headaches

[Visit the NHS website](#)

Antibiotics

Each year 25% of the population visit their GP for a respiratory tract infection (eg sinus, throat or chest infection). These are usually caused by viruses.

For patients who are otherwise healthy, antibiotics are not necessary for viral infections.

These infections will normally clear up by looking after yourself at home with rest, plenty of fluids and paracetamol.

Ear infections typically last 4 days

89% of cases clear up on their own

A sore throat typically lasts 7 days

40% of cases clear up after 3 days and 90% after 7 days without antibiotics

Sinusitis typically lasts 17 days

80% clear up in 14 days without antibiotics

Cough/bronchitis typically lasts 21 days

Antibiotics reduce symptoms by only 1 day

Antibiotics only work for infections caused by bacteria.

Taking unnecessary antibiotics for viral infections should be avoided because they may not be effective next time you have a bacterial infection.

Patients with long-term conditions such as asthma, diabetes and COPD are eligible for flu and pneumococcal vaccinations. Ask at reception for more information.

Medicine cabinet

You can treat many minor ailments such as colds, coughs and indigestion by keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home.

We suggest you keep the following:

- Paracetamol and aspirin (children under 16 and people with asthma should not take aspirin)
- Mild laxatives
- Anti-diarrhoeal medicines
- Rehydration mixture
- Indigestion remedy (for example, antacids)
- Travel sickness tablets
- Sunscreen – SPF15 or higher
- Sunburn treatment (for example, calamine)
- Tweezers and sharp scissors
- A thermometer
- A selection of plasters, non-absorbent cotton wool, elastic bandages and dressings

Remember:

- Keep the medicine chest in a secure, locked place out of reach of small children
- Always read the instructions and use the suggested dose
- Watch expiry dates – don't keep or use medicines past their sell-by date
- Take all unwanted and out-of-date medicines back to the pharmacy

Your pharmacist can help too

Pharmacists are highly trained health professionals and can give you confidential health advice for a range of common illnesses and complaints.

Don't wait for a GP appointment for coughs, colds, aches and pains. Just give your local pharmacy a call or drop in – there's no need to make an appointment.

Your pharmacists can also help you decide if you need to see a doctor or nurse.

[Click here for more information about how pharmacies can help you.](#)

NHS 111

111 is the free NHS non-emergency number.

You should use the NHS 111 service if you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation.

Call 111 if:

- you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency
- you think you need to go to A&E or need another NHS urgent care service
- you don't know who to call or you don't have a GP to call
- you need health information or reassurance about what to do next

[Click here for more information about how NHS 111 can help you.](#)

A&E

A&E is for life-threatening accidents and emergencies only. Before you go there, ask yourself, "Is it a real emergency?"

If not, please consider using other local health services before you visit A&E.