

# Self-Care Support from your Community Pharmacy

## What is self-care?

Self-care is where people improve or manage their own physical and mental wellbeing. This may include the purchase of any medicines they require to treat their symptoms instead of being given a prescription, whilst also being aware when to seek advice from a healthcare professional. Self-care is appropriate for minor or self-limiting conditions where treatment and advice can be sought from a Community Pharmacy or other outlet.

## What is a Minor Condition?

A minor condition is one where the person suffering does not normally need medical advice and can manage the condition themselves. People can buy medicines to treat their condition or manage their symptoms from their Community Pharmacy.

What is a Self-Limiting Condition?

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A self-limiting condition will get better on its own and does not need medical advice or treatment.

## Why should I self-care?

NHS England has recommended that, wherever possible, people manage their own minor medical conditions, which includes buying medicines they require to treat their symptoms instead of being given a prescription. This will free up appointments in GP practices and means NHS money is available where it is most needed to support improvements in other services.

## Is everyone expected to self-care?

People who are able should self-care for minor and self-limiting conditions. For some people, this might not be possible, and in these cases, the relevant healthcare professional will continue to manage the person's conditions.

## How can my Community Pharmacy help me to self-care?

Community Pharmacy teams are the first place to go to get help managing minor and self-limiting conditions. They have the knowledge and skills to provide trusted advice and treat many minor illnesses. They are trained to spot more serious conditions and refer you to other services if needed. You do not need an appointment to speak to the Pharmacy Team and can receive quicker care without the need for a GP appointment.



## What if the Pharmacy cannot treat my symptoms?

If the Pharmacist cannot help you or thinks your condition is more serious, they can refer you to the best place for more help, for example:

- GP
- Optician
- Dentist
- A&E

If the Pharmacist refers you, please follow their advice and visit the healthcare professional recommended.

## Can I go to my GP or A&E to get free medicines to treat my minor condition?

No. All services, including GP Practices, out-of-hours services, and A&E are following the NHS England guidance and advise people with minor or self-limiting conditions to self-care where possible.

### What if I cannot afford to buy a medicine to treat my minor condition?

Get free advice and treatment for minor illnesses without seeing a GP. If you don't pay for your prescriptions, your local pharmacy team may be able to give you advice and, if needed, NHS-funded medicine for common illnesses at no cost to you – no appointment needed!

#### Conditions which can be treated on the Minor Ailments Service

Allergy	Dry eyes	Insect bites and stings
Athlete's foot	Ear wax	Mouth ulcers
Atopic eczema	Otitis externa	Nappy rash
Constipation	Fever	Pain
Contact dermatitis	Head Lice	Teething
Diarrhoea	Indigestion and Heartburn	Threadworm
Oral thrush	Vaginal thrush (age 16-60)	

Please note that this service is for the treatment of active common illnesses. It cannot be used on a 'just in case' basis or to stock up medicine cabinets at home.

### Can the Pharmacy supply any medicine I want on the Minor Ailment Service?

No. When providing advice and treatment under the Minor Ailment Service, your Pharmacy Team will be following national treatment guidance. They will only be able to supply formulary medicines which we know work for the condition, and which are value for money for the NHS. Your Pharmacy can sell you other medicines if you prefer.

### Who can use the Minor Ailment Service?

People can use the service if they:

- are under 16 years of age.
- are 16, 17 or 18 and in full-time education.
- are 60 years of age or over.
- have a valid maternity exemption certificate.
- have a valid medical exemption certificate.
- have a valid prescription exemption certificate issued by Ministry of Defence.
- are named on current HC2 charges certificate.
- get Income Support or income-related ESA.
- get income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- are entitled or named on a valid NHS Tax Credit Exemption certificate.
- receive Pension Credit Guarantee Credit (including partners).
- receive Universal Credit and meet the criteria. Find out more at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/UC](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/UC).

### I have used the Minor Ailment Service in the past but can't use the new service. Why is this?

To help people who cannot afford to self-care, we have kept the service for use by people who meet the financial vulnerability exemptions described above. People who pay for their prescriptions or use pre-payment certificates are no longer able to use the Minor Ailment Service and should self-care for minor and self-limiting conditions.

If you would like this leaflet in a different language or format (including Braille or Easy Read), please contact us at: [england.gmtop@nhs.uk](mailto:england.gmtop@nhs.uk).