

In Hertfordshire, we spend over £6million every year prescribing medicines which patients could have bought for themselves. We all have a responsibility to ensure our NHS money is spent wisely to help as many people as possible.



The NHS belongs to everybody. You can help by looking after yourself and your family, with support from your local pharmacist to treat minor illnesses.

Your expert pharmacist

Pharmacists are experts in medicines and you don't need an appointment to see them.

Many pharmacies are open during evenings and weekends so they are a convenient place to get health advice, instead of waiting for a GP appointment. Almost all pharmacies have a private consultation room.

You can find your nearest pharmacy and also get advice and information on how to treat a range of common ailments by visiting www.nhs.uk

Be prepared

Check your medicine cabinet and make sure you have the following basics to hand when you need them. Any out-of-date medicines should be returned to your pharmacy.

- Painkillers (tablets and liquids), such as paracetamol or ibuprofen
- Antihistamines for allergies
- Rub-on painkilling gel
- Oral rehydration sachets
- Indigestion remedies
- Laxatives
- Anti-diarrhoea medicine
- Cream or spray to treat insect bites, stings, cuts and grazes
- Plasters and dressings



NHS 111

If you need medical help urgently, and it's not life threatening, please call **NHS 111**. This is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and calls are free from landlines and mobiles.

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Many common illnesses are best treated at home - with the advice of a pharmacist

Following a public consultation, medicines that can be bought over-the-counter to treat minor illnesses and short-term conditions will no longer be routinely prescribed.

You can buy medicines from your local pharmacist who has the clinical expertise to help you to manage your symptoms.

This leaflet contains advice and information on how to treat a range of common illnesses, together with tips on medicine cabinet essentials to have at home.

If you would like this information in large print or an alternative format please call 01707 685140.



Treating minor illnesses and injuries. If your problem needs the attention of a doctor, your pharmacist will advise you to see your GP.

Condition	Self-care advice: www.nhs.uk	How your pharmacist can help
Acne (mild)	Speak to your pharmacist for skin care advice.	Benzoyl peroxide creams.
Antiperspirants	Speak to your pharmacist for advice.	Strong antiperspirants such as Driclor®.
Athlete's foot / fungal nail infections	Change your socks and wash your feet daily. Keep your feet covered in communal areas.	Topical antifungal cream / lotion / sprays.
Cold sore	Speak to your pharmacist.	Antiviral cream, such as Zovirax®.
Colic	Speak to your pharmacist or health visitor for advice.	Colic treatments for infants, e.g. Infacol® and gripe water.
Constipation	Increase your intake of soluble fibre (fruit, vegetables or oats) and drink plenty of water.	Laxatives for short-term use (less than 72 hours).
Cough, cold and sore throat	Rest, drink plenty of water and eat healthily. Gargle with salt water for a sore throat.	Paracetamol, ibuprofen, cough and cold remedies.
Diarrhoea, vomiting	Drink frequent sips of water and rest. Seek further advice from a GP if young children and babies are still unwell after 48 hours. Look closely for signs of dehydration in children.	Loperamide or rehydration sachets for short-term diarrhoea.
Dry, itchy scalp, dandruff	Speak to your pharmacist.	Shampoo containing coal tar extract, ketoconazole or selenium.
Dry skin	Moisturise your skin straight after washing and showering.	Skin moisturisers such as bath oils, shower gels, creams and ointments.
Earwax	Place a few drops of olive / almond oil into the ears and leave for 5-10 mins.	Ear drops, such as sodium bicarbonate.
Specialist formula milks for children over 2 years old	Speak to your pharmacist or health visitor.	Formula milk can be purchased from a supermarket or pharmacy, or discuss switching to cow's milk or a lactose-free alternative.
Hay fever and allergies	Speak to your pharmacist.	Antihistamines, steroid nasal sprays, eye drops.
Head lice	Wet combing with conditioner and nit comb.	Head lice shampoo / sprays / lotions.
Indigestion	Make sure you eat small, regular meals. Try to lose weight if you are overweight. Drink less alcohol and if you smoke, consider giving up.	Antacids, alginates or proton pump inhibitors (omeprazole, pantoprazole) and H2-receptor antagonists (ranitidine) for occasional use. If symptoms persist, see your GP.
Minor aches and pains	Speak to your pharmacist.	Paracetamol, ibuprofen and products containing small amounts of codeine. Please read instructions about maximum dosages.
Minor cuts and bruises	Clean the cut with antiseptic cream or lotion, keep wound aired and dry, apply plaster if needed. Apply cold pack to bruised area.	First aid products.
Minor sprains	PRICE (Protect, Rest, Ice, Compress and Elevate).	Anti-inflammatory painkillers.
Piles (haemorrhoids)	Increase your intake of soluble fibre (fruit, vegetables or oats) and drink plenty of water.	Piles cream, ointment or suppositories.
Skin and nappy rash	Encourage nappy-free time to air the skin.	Nappy rash cream, such as Sudocrem®.
Sports injuries	Avoid HARM (Heat, Alcohol, Running, and Massage) for the first 72 hours.	Anti-inflammatory painkillers.
Sun protection	Purchase sun creams / sprays from supermarkets or pharmacies. Cover up with a hat and light, long sleeved clothing. Stay out of the full sun between 11am and 3pm.	Sun creams and sprays.
Threadworm (worms)	Speak to your pharmacist.	Threadworm (chewable) tablets.
Toothache or teething pain in babies	For adults, take paracetamol or ibuprofen. Make appointment at a dentist. For babies, consider using liquid paracetamol (e.g. Calpol®) for pain relief.	Dental products e.g. toothpastes, mouthwashes, gargles, teething gel.
Travel sickness	Speak to your pharmacist.	Travel sickness medication and advice.
Vaginal thrush	Speak to your pharmacist.	Tablets, antifungal cream or pessaries, such as Canesten®.
Vitamins/mineral supplements and probiotics	Speak to your pharmacist. For infants, contact your local Children's Centre for free Healthy Start vitamins: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/childrenscentres	Available from pharmacies and also supermarkets and health food shops.
Warts and verrucae	Speak to your pharmacist.	Salicylic acid lotions, paints or plasters.