

ASK YOUR PHARMACIST



We all know that pharmacists dispense medicines.

But they do a lot more than that. Local pharmacies offer several health services that many of us aren't aware of. For example, pharmacies promote health and wellbeing and provide access to [stopping smoking](#), [sexual health](#) and [alcohol support](#) services. These services could save you a trip to your GP, or help you to make healthy lifestyle changes.

Your pharmacy

In England, most of us are within a 20-minute car ride or walk of a community pharmacy. That means we all have quick and easy access to a pharmacist who's an expert in the safe use of medicines, and must be registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council before they can practise.

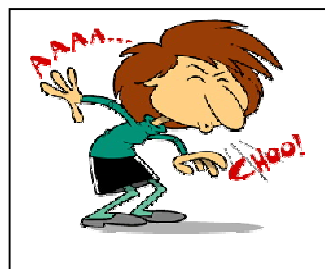
Your medicines

Pharmacists are trained experts in the use of medicines. They can advise you on the safe use of prescription and over-the-counter medicines.

Many pharmacies are open until late and at weekends, which is useful if you start feeling unwell at 9pm and the local GPs are all shut.

WHEN TO GO TO YOUR PHARMACY

Pharmacies can help with a range of common conditions and minor injuries, such as aches and pains, uncomplicated cystitis, colds and skin rashes.



These kinds of health matters lead to around 57 million GP consultations a year. We could save ourselves and the GP time if we went to the pharmacy instead. No appointment is needed.

If you have one of these common conditions, your pharmacist can give advice and medicines, if appropriate. These medicines won't be on prescription, so you'll have to pay for them. Your pharmacist can also tell you if you need to see a GP.

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Here are a few other ways some local pharmacies can help:

- Emergency contraception: if you need the morning-after pill. This can work for up to 72 hours after sex, but the sooner you take it the more likely it will work. Many pharmacies sell this over the counter after a consultation with the pharmacist. Some may provide it free on the NHS.
- Needle and syringe exchange services.
- Pregnancy tests. Most pharmacies provide pregnancy test kits, and a few have a private area where you can use the kit.