

# Self-Care Support from your Community Pharmacy

## What is self-care?

Self-care is where people manage their own medical conditions and buy any medicines they require to treat their symptoms instead of being given a prescription. Self-care is appropriate for minor or self-limiting conditions where treatments can be bought 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?

A self-limiting condition is one that will get better on its own and does not need treatment as it will heal or be cured without medicines.

## 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 GP or Nurse 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 treat many minor illnesses. They can provide a wide range of advice and medicines to help manage your symptoms. 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.



### 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
- Walk-in-centre

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

## Can I go to my GP, Walk-in-Centre or A&E to get free medicines to treat my minor condition?

No, all services including GP Practices, out of hours services, extended access hubs, walk-in-centres, and A&E are following the NHS England guidance and advising people with minor or self-limiting conditions to self-care.

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

The Minor Ailments Service is available from most Community Pharmacies. The service will allow Community Pharmacies to provide over-the-counter medicines free of charge to people who are currently entitled to free prescriptions and are unable to buy the medicines they need to treat their minor condition.

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

Allergic skin reaction	Minor external ear infections	Pain caused by minor conditions
Allergy	Eczema	Nappy rash
Athlete's foot	Fever	Sprains and strains
Constipation	Hay fever	Teething
Dental pain	Head Lice	Tummy upset
Dermatitis	Headache	Toothache
Diarrhoea	Indigestion and Heartburn	Oral thrush
Dry eyes	Insect bites and stings	Vaginal thrush (age 16-60)
Ear wax	Mouth ulcers	

Pharmacies will not be able to provide medicines to treat self-limiting conditions as these conditions will get better on their own without treatment and medicines are not needed.

### 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 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 or over 60 years old
- They are 16,17 or 18 **and** in full time education
- They have a valid maternity or medical exemption certificate
- They have a valid prescription exemption certificate issued by Ministry of Defence
- They are named on a current HC2 charges certificate
- They receive Income Support, Income based Job seekers Allowance or Income related Employment and Support allowance.
- They have a valid Tax Credit exemption certificate
- They receive Pension Credit Guarantee Credit (including partners)
- They receive Universal Credit **and** meets the criteria. *Find out more at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/UC](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/UC)*
- Other extended eligibility

### 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 a service for use by people who meet the financial vulnerability exception described above.

People who pay for their prescriptions or uses 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 on:

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