

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 shop.

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. People are not expected to self-care if they have a long-term or more serious condition.

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?

From 1 November 2020, the new Greater Manchester Minor Ailment Scheme will be available from most Community Pharmacies across most of Greater Manchester. The scheme will allow Community Pharmacies to provide over-the-counter medicines free of charge to people on low income (and their families) who are currently entitled to free prescriptions and who are unable to buy the medicines they need to treat their minor condition.

Conditions which can be treated on the Greater Manchester Minor Ailment Scheme

Allergic Skin Reaction	Eczema	Mouth Ulcers
Allergy	Fever	Pain caused by minor conditions
Athletes Foot	Hay Fever	
Constipation	Headache	Nappy Rash
Dental Pain	Head Lice	Oral Thrush
Dermatitis	Heartburn	Sprains and Strains
Diarrhoea	High Temperature	Teething
Dry Eyes	Indigestion	Threadworm
Earache	Insect Bites	Toothache
Ear Wax	Insect Stings	Tummy Upset

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 Scheme?

No. When providing advice and treatment under the Minor Ailment Scheme, 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 Greater Manchester Minor Ailment Scheme?

People can use the scheme if:

- They are named on a current HC2 charges certificate
- They or their partner receives Income Support, Income based Job seekers Allowance or Income related Employment and Support allowance, or they are a young person under the age of 20 who is dependent on someone receiving these benefits.
- They receive Universal Credit and entitlement to free prescriptions is stated on the Universal Credit award notice.

I have used the Minor Ailment scheme in the past but can't use the new Greater Manchester scheme, why is this?

The previous Minor Ailment Scheme used to be available to all people who did not need to pay prescription charges. Now that NHS England have advised that people should self-care for minor and self-limiting conditions, including people who get free prescriptions, this scheme has stopped.

To help people who cannot afford to self-care we have kept a scheme for use by people who meet the financial vulnerability exception described above. This scheme is being used across Greater Manchester.

People who get free prescriptions for non-financial reasons are no longer able to use the Minor Ailment Scheme and should self-care for minor and self-limiting conditions.