

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Keeping a few useful medicines at home means you can treat common conditions immediately without needing to see a healthcare professional.

### These could include:

- Indigestion medicines and treatments for constipation and diarrhoea
- Treatments for seasonal conditions like colds and hay fever
- Sunblock and after sun
- Basic first aid items (for example plasters and antiseptic cream)

If you have children, make sure you also have products suitable for them.

Speak to your local pharmacy team about what medicines to keep at home, where to store them safely and how to use them.

**PLEASE HELP  
THE NHS TO  
USE RESOURCES  
SENSIBLY**

## WHAT IF MY SYMPTOMS DON'T IMPROVE?

Your local pharmacy team can tell you how long to expect the symptoms of your condition to last.

If they haven't improved after this time or you start to feel a lot worse, **you should:**

- **Go back to the pharmacy for further advice**
- **Call NHS 111**
- **Contact your local GP**

## PRESCRIBING OF OVER THE COUNTER MEDICINES HAS CHANGED

Your GP or nurse **will not generally** give you a prescription for medicines for a range of minor health concerns when they are available to buy over the counter.

Visit the NHS website:  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
for information and advice on treating minor health conditions.



# WHY DOES THE NHS NEED TO REDUCE PRESCRIPTIONS FOR OVER THE COUNTER MEDICINES?

The NHS has been spending around **£136 million a year** on prescriptions for medicines that can be bought from a pharmacy or supermarket, such as paracetamol.

By reducing the amount the NHS spends on over the counter medicines, we can give priority to treatments for people with more serious conditions, such as cancer, diabetes and mental health problems.

Instead, over the counter medicines are available to buy in a pharmacy or supermarket in your local community.

The team of health professionals at your local pharmacy can offer help and clinical advice to manage minor health concerns and if your symptoms suggest it's more serious, they will ensure you get the care you need.

**PLEASE HELP THE NHS TO USE RESOURCES SENSIBLY**

Your GP or nurse will not generally give you a prescription for medicines used to treat certain minor ailments, if they are readily available from the pharmacy or supermarket, **even if you qualify for free prescriptions.**

**These are some of the conditions it applies to:**

- Acute sore throat
- Conjunctivitis
- Coughs, colds and nasal congestion
- Cradle cap
- Dry eyes/sore tired eyes
- Haemorrhoids
- Head lice
- Indigestion and heartburn
- Infant colic
- Infrequent migraine
- Mild acne
- Mild cystitis
- Mild dry skin
- Mild irritant dermatitis
- Mild to moderate hay fever
- Minor pain, discomfort and fever, (eg aches and sprains, headache, period pain and back)
- Mouth ulcers
- Nappy rash
- Oral thrush
- Ringworm/athletes foot
- Threadworms
- Vitamin supplements

## EXCEPTIONS TO THE NEW PRESCRIPTION POLICY

**You may still be prescribed a medicine for a condition on the list if:**

- You need treatment for a long term condition e.g. regular pain relief for chronic arthritis or inflammatory bowel disease.
- You need treatment for more complex forms of minor illnesses, e.g. migraines that are very bad and where over the counter medicines do not work.
- You need an over the counter medicine to treat a side effect of a prescription medicine or symptom of another illness, e.g. constipation when taking certain painkillers.
- The medicine has a licence which doesn't allow the product to be sold over the counter to certain groups of patients. This could include babies, children or women who are pregnant or breast feeding.
- The person prescribing thinks that a patient cannot treat themselves, for example because of mental health problems or severe social vulnerability.

**The reasons may vary for each condition. Your GP or nurse will speak to you if this affects you.**

