

Be self-care aware

Many common illnesses or symptoms are best treated at home with rest or with advice from a community pharmacist – with no need to see a doctor or nurse.



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

Bexley GPs are no longer routinely writing prescriptions for coughs and colds, dry skin, upset tummies, minor cuts, and other minor ailments and injuries.

Instead, patients are encouraged to treat short term minor health problems at home, with over-the-counter (OTC) medicines where appropriate.

This is known as self-care.

Why should you self-care?

When you're unwell, home is where you might want to be. Most everyday health problems can be managed at home. With self-care, you can take control and hopefully start to feel better quicker.

Use the information in this leaflet, and for further advice, visit www.bexleyccg.nhs.uk.

How can my local pharmacist help?

Every year, patients make around 50 million visits to their GP for minor ailments. Instead of booking and waiting for a GP appointment, you can visit your local pharmacist without an appointment.

All pharmacists can recognise many common health complaints.

They can give advice and, where appropriate, medicines that will help.

Visiting your pharmacist helps free up your GP's time, making it easier to get an appointment with your GP the next time you need one.

You can have a confidential consultation with the pharmacist in a private area of the pharmacy.

If your problem needs the attention of a GP, your pharmacist will recognise this and advise you to see your GP.

Many pharmacies are open during evenings and weekends.



Condition	Self-care advice	How your pharmacist can help
Acne	Speak to your pharmacist for skin care advice	Benzyl peroxide
Athlete's foot	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	Aciclovir cream
Cough, cold, blocked nose, fever	Rest, drink plenty of water and eat healthily	Paracetamol, ibuprofen, cough and cold remedies
Constipation	Increase your intake of soluble fibres and fluids	Laxatives
Diarrhoea, vomiting	Drink plenty of water and rest	Loperamide, oral rehydration salts
Dry skin	Moisturise your skin straight after washing and showering	Skin moisturisers
Dry eye	Discuss with your pharmacist, as some medication can cause dry eyes	Lubricating/ moisturising eye drops
Earwax	A few drops of warmed olive oil or almond oil into the ears and leave for 5-10 minutes	Sodium bicarbonate ear drops



Condition	Self-care advice	How your pharmacist can help
Eye infection	For a sty or chalazion: soak a clean flannel in hot, but not scalding, water. Then place the flannel, gently but firmly, against the closed eye. Do this for 5-10 min, 3-4 times a day.	Chloramphenicol eye drops
Hair removal	Speak to your pharmacist	Hair removal products
Hay fever and allergies	Speak to your pharmacist	Antihistamine tablets, steroid nasal sprays
Head lice	Wet combing with conditioner and lice detection comb	Head lice shampoo / sprays / lotions
Indigestion	Make sure you eat regular meals Lose weight if you are overweight obese. Drink less alcohol and if you smoke, consider giving up.	Antacids, simeticone and alginates for occasional use. If symptoms persist after self-care, see your GP.
Dry, itchy scalp	Speak to your pharmacist	Shampoo containing coal tar extract, ketoconazole and selenium
Minor aches and pains	Speak to your pharmacist	Paracetamol, ibuprofen or codeine
Minor cuts and bruises	Speak to your pharmacist	First aid products

Condition	Self-care advice	How your pharmacist can help
Minor sprains	PRICE (Protect, Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation)	Rub-on anti-inflammatory painkillers
Mouth ulcer, sore throat	Gargle with salt water	Lozenges, sprays
Piles (haemorrhoids)	Increase soluble fibre and fluid intake	Piles cream
Sports injuries	Avoid HARM (Heat, Alcohol, Running, and Massage)	Rub-on anti-inflammatory painkillers
Skin and nappy rash	Speak to your pharmacist	Nappy rash cream
Skin pigmentation, scarring	Speak to your pharmacist	Camouflage creams
Sun protection	Speak to your pharmacist	Sun creams and sprays
Threadworm	Speak to your pharmacist	Threadworm (chewable) tablets
Vaginal thrush	Speak to your pharmacist	Antifungal cream / pessary / tablets
Vitamins and mineral supplements	Speak to your pharmacist	Available from supermarkets and pharmacies
Warts and verrucae	Speak to your pharmacist	Salicylic acid lotions, paints or plasters

Check your medicine cabinet and make sure you have the following basics to hand when you need them:

- Painkillers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen
- Antihistamine for allergies
- Bandages
- Rub-on anti-inflammatory painkillers
- Oral rehydration salts
- Indigestion remedies
- Laxatives
- Anti-diarrhoea medicine
- Cream or spray to treat insect bites and stings, or cuts and grazes
- Plasters and dressings
- A thermometer

Make sure medicines in your cabinet are still okay to use. If any medicines are past their use-by date, don't take them.

What if my child needs medicines while at school?

Guidance from the Department of Education makes it clear that a child can take non-prescription self-care medicines if the child's parent or guardian has given specific prior written permission.

As parents can provide this consent, it is not necessary for GPs to write to schools to confirm that it is appropriate to administer self-care medicines.

The age at which children are ready to take their own medicines varies. As children grow and develop, they should be encouraged to participate in decisions about their medicines and take responsibility for their medicines.

Did you know?

In Bexley, we spend £30.8 million on prescribing medicines, of which, £1.4 million a year is spent on medicines and other items that are also available for people to buy without a prescription from a pharmacy or a supermarket.

In addition, we estimate that around £550,000 worth of medicines are thrown away each year by Bexley residents. This contributes to the £300 million spent on unused medicines that is wasted by the NHS as a whole across the UK each year.

Your local NHS, and your GP, have a responsibility to ensure we spend your money wisely to help as many people as possible.

The NHS belongs to everybody and is paid for by the taxes you pay. That's why we encourage patients to look after themselves and their children where possible and to treat minor ailments with support from their local pharmacy if needed.



Your Bexley GP at your fingertips

You can now use the NHS Online Bexley app for online consultations, ordering repeat prescriptions and much more. The same services you trust, now more convenient than ever.

Download NHS Online Bexley from your appstore







Useful information

For more advice and information on how to treat a range of common ailments, visit

www.bexleyccg.nhs.uk/selfcare.

Find out more about the essential medicines every household medicine cabinet should have

www.nhs.uk/livewell/pharmacy.

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Call NHS 111 if you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation:

www.nhs.uk

Can you help improve local health services?

If you would like to get involved in helping to shape health services in Bexley, contact the patient engagement team on **0800 328 9712**

or **bexccg.contactus@nhs.net**

To find out more about NHS Bexley CCG, visit **www.bexleyccg.nhs.uk** or follow us on Twitter **[@NHSBexleyCCG](https://twitter.com/NHSBexleyCCG)**



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