

# Turn to your Pharmacist

WHEN YOU'RE ILL, KNOW WHO TO TURN TO.





**COUGHS AND COLDS.  
INDIGESTION.  
CONSTIPATION.  
ACHES AND PAINS.  
HEAD LICE.  
TURN TO YOUR PHARMACIST.**

All pharmacies dispense prescriptions and most supply emergency contraception on the NHS. If you run out of your regular medicines and can't obtain a prescription from your GP, your pharmacist can dispense an urgent repeat supply.

But pharmacists do much more than just dispense prescriptions. Drop into your local pharmacy anytime to get expert advice or information on healthcare, as well as help with your medicines. There is no need to make an appointment.

Your pharmacist sells a wide range of over the counter medicines to treat minor ailments such as hay fever, athlete's foot, head lice and cold sores (treatment for minor ailments is provided free of charge under the Minor Ailment Service to some patients e.g. over 60, under 16 or receiving benefits such as Income Support. Ask your pharmacist for more details).

To find your local pharmacy call our free healthline on **0500 20 20 30** or visit [www.know-who-to-turn-to.com](http://www.know-who-to-turn-to.com)

# WHAT YOUR PHARMACY CAN DO FOR YOU

## Most pharmacies:

- Dispense prescriptions (free to patients living in Scotland and registered with a Scottish GP).
- Sell non-prescription medicines such as treatments for skin problems or coughs and colds.
- Have private consultation rooms.
- Give advice on:
  - Minor ailments and how to deal with them e.g. diarrhoea, coughs, colds, pain.
  - Prescribed and over the counter medicines – how and when to take them, whether they should be taken with food, or will affect any other medicine you are on.
  - Healthy living – increasing exercise, eating well etc.
  - Drugs in sport – which medicines contain substances banned by sports' governing bodies.
  - Preventative treatments e.g. drugs to lower cholesterol, sun care, sexual health.
  - Complementary or alternative medicines – which ones are suitable for your condition and can be taken along with your regular medicine.
  - Care of babies, children and the elderly, whose needs may differ because of their age.



## Many pharmacies also provide:

- Help to stop smoking – weekly advice, therapies, support.
- Advice on emergency hormonal contraception (morning after pill).
- Advice on travel healthcare.
- Flu immunisation.
- Support for Substance Misuse clients including Needle Exchange services.
- Chronic Medication Service for people with long term conditions such as asthma or diabetes.

All pharmacies follow the same rules of confidentiality as doctors and will keep your information private, except in very rare cases if you are at risk of serious harm.

## When will my pharmacy be open?

Pharmacies are open during normal working hours from Monday to Saturday; some may be open in the evening and on Sundays.

Your pharmacist can help when your GP practice is closed, e.g. Saturdays. They will discuss your symptoms with you and help you decide if you need to see a doctor, even if your own doctor is not available.

If you do, they may talk to an 'out-of-hours' doctor or make an appointment with them for you. They may give you an emergency supply of your prescribed medicine if you have run out.

### Remember:

Pharmacists are highly skilled and trained professionals. They can answer questions you may have about choosing and using the right medicine, provide easy to understand advice on treating everyday ailments, and will help you decide if you need to see a doctor.

## PRESCRIPTIONS

If you have a regular repeat prescription from your GP, plan ahead. Check your supply at home – don't wait until your medicines have run out, but, **ONLY ORDER WHAT YOU NEED**. If you order your medicines too far in advance they may go out of date before you can use them or your GP may need to change the medicines that you get. Do not keep large stocks of medicines in your home as this might put others at risk.

If you run out of your medicines when GP practices are closed or you forget to take them with you when you are away from home, a community pharmacist may be able to give you up to one month's supply of your regular repeat medicines without a prescription from your GP.

If your prescription is marked urgent your GP will tell you where to have the medicine dispensed, even if pharmacies would normally be closed.



# TAKING YOUR MEDICINE CORRECTLY

Always follow the instructions carefully. Some types of medication must be taken at regular intervals, while others can be taken when you need them. In some instances it is important that the medicine should be taken before, during or after a meal or snack. This might be to ensure it is most effective or to reduce the chance of side effects. All medication should come with instructions that will explain the correct dosage and use. This information must be read prior to taking the medication. If you are uncertain about how to take your medicine ask your pharmacist or doctor for advice.

When receiving prescription or non-prescription medicines from your pharmacist, expect to be asked a few questions. These are to check the medicine you're getting is right for you and your condition.

## Always check with your pharmacist:

- Is it safe to take several types of medicine at the same time? (This may include prescription and non-prescription medicines).
- Are there any known side effects?
- Is it safe to drive while taking the medication?
- Is it safe to drink alcohol while taking the medication?



## Remember:

- Always read the label on your medicines and take them as instructed.
- Always read the information leaflet provided with your medicine – it will advise you of the best way to take your medicine.
- Keep medicines in a cool, dark place, safely out of the reach of children.
- If you have unwanted or out of date medicines return them to your local pharmacist for safe disposal.
- Don't throw unwanted medicines out with household waste or flush them down the toilet – this can put others at risk or cause dangerous pollution.



## FIRST AID KITS AND HOME MEDICINES CABINETS

In addition to any prescription medicines it is useful to have a first aid box/kit and a small stock of medicines to treat minor ailments. Your Community Pharmacist, in addition to recommending specific treatments, can also provide advice on the management of minor ailments.

### A basic first aid kit should include:

- Plasters of assorted sizes.
- Sterile non-adhesive eye dressings and other dressings of assorted sizes.
- Non-absorbent cotton wool.
- Triangular bandage.
- Safety pins.
- Thermometer (preferably the forehead type for children).
- Tweezers.
- Scissors.
- Antiseptic cream and liquid.
- Adhesive tape.
- Support bandages.
- Disposable gloves.

## A home medicines cabinet might contain the following:

- **Pain relief**  
Paracetamol and ibuprofen are the most common remedies. It is useful to have these in tablet and liquid form. Aspirin and ibuprofen also reduce inflammation (remember, aspirin should not be given to anyone under 16 years of age).
- **Anti-histamines**  
Help allergies and runny noses. These are available as tablets and liquids.
- **Diarrhoea treatments**  
Make sure you drink plenty of non-alcoholic liquid for the first 24 hours. Your pharmacist can also recommend rehydration drinks.
- **Indigestion remedies**  
Various different types are available. A simple antacid will relieve the majority of symptoms.
- **A mild laxative**  
For constipation.
- **Hangover treatments**  
It is important to drink plenty of water or non-alcoholic liquids. Rehydration remedies (which include paracetamol) are available from your pharmacy.
- **Sore throat remedy**  
General pain relief is recommended e.g. paracetamol. Adults may gargle with soluble aspirin. Throat lozenges and sprays may also ease symptoms.



- **Cough linctus**  
Many different types are available. These will either reduce a cough or loosen it.
- **Travel sickness tablets**  
Containing hyoscine or an antihistamine such as cinnarizine.
- **Sunscreen SPF 15**  
(or higher for children and vulnerable adults) and sunburn treatment e.g. calamine lotion.
- **Children's medicines**  
There are children's formulations available for most medicines. Ask your pharmacist if there's a sugar-free variety available, particularly if it's a regularly used medicine.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### FREE NHS GRAMPIAN HEALTHLINE

Provides up-to-date, quality assured information on diseases, conditions, NHS services and support groups and organisations.

**0500 20 20 30**

(9am - 5pm Monday - Friday)

### NHS 24

If you or someone you care for are unwell and you feel you can't wait until your GP surgery re-opens, then you can call NHS 24.

**08454 24 24 24**

(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

### BE READY FOR WINTER

Find up-to-date information to help you to look after you and your family's health during the winter months. Also the days and dates when your GP surgery is closed at Christmas and New Year and what to do if you fall ill and can't wait until they open again.

[www.winterhealthadvice.co.uk](http://www.winterhealthadvice.co.uk)

### FOR INFORMATION ON FIRST AID CLASSES CONTACT:

St Andrew's Ambulance Association  
**(01224) 877271**

British Red Cross  
**(01224) 647741**





**[www.know-who-to-turn-to.com](http://www.know-who-to-turn-to.com)**

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