



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# NHS Pharmacy First

Information for patients  
who have come to A&E  
(the Emergency Department)  
and are redirected.

**Patient information**

## What is this information about?

This information is about the NHS Pharmacy First service. **It explains:**

- What the service is and what it can help you with.
- How you can use the service.
- What happens in the pharmacy when you use the service.
- What happens if the Pharmacy First pharmacist thinks that it would be better for you to see a doctor.

## Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because the condition or need for a supply of regular medication that you have come to A and E for does not need to be treated or supplied by staff in the A and E.

We are referring you to the Pharmacy First Service as you have a minor illness or need a repeat prescription urgently. For both things a pharmacy is the first place you should go for advice and not A and E.

## What is the NHS Pharmacy First Service?

The NHS Pharmacy First Service is provided by your local Community Pharmacy the Pharmacy First service supports the supply of urgent medication and minor illness consultations.

Pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals who have completed 5 years of training including a Master's degree and together with their team are experts in medicines. They can help with your concerns about health conditions which are not too serious (minor health conditions). They can also provide NHS funded medication for certain conditions if they think that you need it or where appropriate.

## Do I need an appointment to use the Pharmacy First Service?

No, you do not need an appointment but you can contact the pharmacy you have been referred to first if you want to attend at a specific time.

## What kinds of minor illness can the Pharmacy First service help me with?

The pharmacist can give you advice and recommend treatment for minor illnesses such as:

- acne
- allergies
- athlete's foot
- backache
- blocked or runny nose
- cold sores
- constipation
- cough
- cystitis (in women)
- diarrhoea
- earache
- eczema
- headache
- headlice
- indigestion
- mouth ulcers
- pain
- period pain
- sore throat
- threadworms
- thrush
- warts
- verrucas.

For certain minor illnesses where appropriate NHS funded treatment can be provided this includes the following conditions:

- Impetigo (ages 1 and over).
- Otitis Media (ages 1 to 17 years old).
- Infected insect bites (ages 1 and over).

- Shingles (ages 18 and over).
- Sinusitis (ages 12 and over).
- Sore throat (ages 5 and over).
- Urinary Tract Infections (woman aged 16 to 64 years old).

## What happens when I see the pharmacist?

Your consultation will be in a private place in the pharmacy so that other people in the pharmacy will not see or hear what happens in it.

- The pharmacist will ask you questions about your health.  
This may include questions about:
  - Your health and how you are, including any symptoms you have.
  - Health conditions that you have had in the past.
  - Any allergies you have.
  - Any medicines that you are taking.
- The pharmacist may ask you if you agree (give your consent) to them checking your patient GP record.
- For some conditions, the pharmacist may ask if they can check how you are (examine you). For example, if you have symptoms that mean you may have an ear infection.
- Once the pharmacist has decided what condition you have they will recommend treatment for you if you need it or tell you what they think you should do next.
- The pharmacist will make a record of what has happened in your consultation and what they recommend, and they will share it with your GP. Notes of what happened will be added to your patient records.

## Will the pharmacist do tests to help them to decide what condition I may have (diagnose my condition)?

The pharmacist will not do diagnostic tests such as testing your pee (urine) with a dip-stick or sore throat swabs as for the condition you are being referred for, they are not needed.

## What happens if the pharmacist thinks that it is better for me to see a doctor?

They may:

- Send you back (refer you back) to A and E or
- Refer you to your own GP surgery.

### Be aware, if you are asked to return to A and E:

Do tell the reception team that you have been sent back from a pharmacy after 'redirection'.

You will be seen as a priority and will not have to join the back of the queue in A and E.

## What else can Community Pharmacies help with?

Community Pharmacies are often the easiest way to get support with things such as:

- Healthy living advice getting more exercise.
- Healthy eating.

Many pharmacies also offer the following NHS services:

- Blood pressure testing.
- Oral contraception either initiation or the ongoing supply.
- Flu and covid vaccinations.





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