



NHS

*West Kent
Clinical Commissioning Group*

Pharmacy First



Common Ailments Scheme

How pharmacies can help you with advice and treatments for common minor ailments

Information for patients eligible for free NHS prescriptions

Common Ailments Scheme



Many pharmacies in West Kent are taking part in the Common Ailments Scheme which helps people who don't usually have to pay for NHS prescriptions access medicines for common minor ailments, free of charge.

Simply walk in to a pharmacy and ask for advice; you do not need to make an appointment. To find a participating pharmacy search 'Health Help Now Pharmacy First' online or ask your GP surgery which local pharmacies are offering this service.

Pharmacy staff will be able to make a diagnosis and offer you advice and treatment. The pharmacist may decide that you need to see a doctor and refer you to your GP, without giving you any medicine.

Common ailments treated under this scheme:

- Cold & Cough symptoms/ Flu/Nasal Congestion/ Temperature/Fever
- Cough only - not related to Cold/Flu symptoms
- Sore Throat - not related to Cold/Flu symptoms
- Eczema/ Contact Dermatitis/ Dry Skin/Allergic Rashes
- Cold Sores
- Conjunctivitis (acute bacterial)
- Constipation (acute)
- Cystitis
- Diarrhoea (acute)
- Fungal skin infections
- Hay Fever/Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis
- Headache/Acute Pain
- Head Lice
- Indigestion/Dyspepsia
- Insect Bites and Stings
- Soft Tissue Injury
- Threadworm
- Vaginal Thrush

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to visit a GP for treatment of common ailments?

Not always. You can visit your local pharmacist for expert advice and receive a recommendation for a medicine to treat your common ailment where appropriate.

Why go to your pharmacist first?

Pharmacists are trained to deal with common minor ailments, and this benefits patients because they receive expert advice in the pharmacy, when they need it, without the need to make an appointment with their GP. GP appointments can then be used for patients with more complicated symptoms. Antibiotics don't work against viral infections such as colds and will not be prescribed by your doctor.

What is the Common Ailments Scheme?

The Common Ailments Scheme is a service for anyone who is registered with a GP in West Kent who doesn't pay for NHS prescriptions. This includes children. It enables them to get advice and some medications free of charge from their pharmacy.

The pharmacist will ask questions about:

- your or your child's symptoms
- your current medication
- history of the ailment
- any other illness you have.



Will I still be able to see a GP?

Yes, if you want to you can still have an appointment to see the GP or nurse. The Common Ailments Scheme is just another way that you can get advice and treatment without waiting for an appointment with your GP.

Important Information

You should not share your medication with anyone else, even if they have the same symptoms. If your symptoms persist, you should seek further advice from your doctor.

Remember you are only entitled to treatment free of charge if you are eligible for free NHS prescriptions. If not, you can still obtain the same advice free of charge but will need to pay for your medicines.

If you're concerned about your health, call **NHS 111**

You can qualify for this scheme if you:

- are 60 or over
- are under 16
- are 16-18 and in full-time education
- have a valid maternity exemption certificate
- have a valid medical exemption certificate
- hold a valid War Pension exemption certificate and the prescription is for your accepted disability
- are named on, a current HC2 charges certificate: get Income Support or Income related Jobseeker's Allowance; Income-related Employment and Support Allowance; Pension Credit Guarantee Credit are entitled to, or named on, a valid NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate
- have a partner who gets Pension Credit guarantee credit (PCGC)