

## Be prepared for common illnesses and short notice self-isolation

Be prepared for illness and short notice self-isolation by ensuring you have a supply of over the counter medicines available at home: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/your-medicine-cabinet/>. Many of the symptoms of common health problems can be treated with medicines at home or from your pharmacist, without the need for a GP appointment. In children over 3 months old, <http://www.whenshouldiworry.com/> tells you when you should to speak to a doctor urgently about your child. Self-care factsheets can also be found [here](#). **Children and adults with chronic conditions should still seek medical advice.** Medications and first aid kit listed below are not a complete list but will help you manage most conditions. **For information on symptoms and treatment of COVID-19, please click [here](#).**

### First aid

A first aid kit can help treat minor cuts, sprains and bruises, and reduce the risk infection:

- ✓ **thermometer**
- ✓ **antiseptic** to clean cuts and wounds before being dressed
- ✓ **plasters and sterile dressings**; larger injuries and [wounds](#) should be covered with a sterile dressing until treatment can be given by a health professional.
- ✓ **bandages** can be wrapped around an [injured joint](#) to support it
- ✓ **medical tape** used to secure dressings. It can also be used to tape an [injured finger](#) or toe to an uninjured one, creating a makeshift splint while you are waiting to see a doctor
- ✓ **eyewash solution** to wash out grit or dirt in the [eyes](#)
- ✓ **tweezers** for removing [splinters](#)

Most prepacked first Aid boxes will contain these.

### Most common illnesses do *not* need antibiotics

Infection	usually better by:
<a href="#">vomiting</a>	1-2 days
<a href="#">middle-ear infection</a>	4-8 days
<a href="#">diarrhoea</a>	5-7 days
<a href="#">sore throat</a>	7-8 days
<a href="#">common cold</a>	14 days
<a href="#">sinusitis</a>	14-21 days
<a href="#">cough or bronchitis*</a>	three weeks

**click on infection to see treatment options and when you should seek help sooner**

*\*For coughs, fever and loss of smell or taste, stay at home and visit [NHS Covid-19](#), for testing and advice.*

### When you get a common illness:

- have plenty of **rest**
- drink enough **fluids** to avoid feeling thirsty
- use a **tissue** and **wash your hands** well to help prevent the spread of your infection
- **talk to your pharmacist** for advice. Add your local pharmacist's number to your phonebook



**Pain relief:** Medications such as aspirin, paracetamol and ibuprofen are highly effective at relieving most minor aches and pains, such as headaches and period pain. All are available without a prescription. In minor illnesses, such as the common cold, they reduce aches, pain and high temperatures\*. Do not give Aspirin to children under 16 years. [Click here to find out which painkiller to use.](#)

### Oral rehydration salts (ORS):

Essential minerals and water are lost after a period of fever\*, [diarrhoea or vomiting](#). Drink enough water to avoid feeling thirsty. Oral rehydration salts can help to restore your body's natural balance of minerals and fluid if you are feeling dehydrated.



### Indigestion treatment:

If you have stomach ache, [heartburn or trapped wind](#), antacids like Alka-Seltzer, Tums or Milk of Magnesia can help reduce stomach acid and bring relief.

### Antihistamines:

These are medications that help control symptoms associated with [hay fever](#), allergies and reactions to [insect bites or stings](#).



### Medicine safety

- Ask your pharmacist for help, they will also tell you common side effects and when to speak to a doctor.
- Always **follow the directions** on medicine packets and information leaflets, and never take more than the stated dose
- Always **keep medicines out of sight and reach of children** – a high, lockable cupboard in a cool, dry place is ideal
- Check the **expiry date** on medicines – do not use a medicine that is past its use-by date; take it to a pharmacy, where it can be disposed of safely
- Do not take medicines prescribed for others

*\*For coughs, fevers and loss of smell or taste, visit [NHS Covid-19](#), for testing and advice. Stay at home until you get the result.*

South East London Integrated Medicines Optimisation Committee (SEL IMOC). A partnership between NHS organisations in South East London: South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (covering the boroughs of Bexley/Bromley/Greenwich/ Lambeth/Lewisham and Southwark) and GSTFT/KCH /SLaM/ Oxleas NHS Foundation Trusts and Lewisham & Greenwich NHS Trust

Approval Date: February 2021 Review Date: August 2021 (or sooner if indicated). **Not to be used for commercial or marketing purposes. Strictly for use within the NHS**