

# 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 in your [medicines cabinet](#) and a well-stocked [first aid kit](#).** Many of the symptoms of common health problems can be treated with medicines at home or from your local community pharmacy, without the need for a GP appointment. In children over 3 months old, the leaflet "[When should I worry?](#)" tells you when you should to speak to a doctor urgently about your child. [The NHS website](#) and [self-care factsheets](#) can also provide further condition specific information. **Patients with long-term 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 the symptoms, treatment and management of COVID-19, please see the government website for up-to-date advice.](#)

<p><b><a href="#">First aid</a></b></p> <p>A first aid kit can help treat minor cuts, sprains and bruises, and reduce the risk of infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>thermometer</b></li> <li>✓ <b>antiseptic</b> to clean cuts and wounds before being dressed</li> <li>✓ <b>plasters and sterile dressings</b>; larger injuries and <a href="#">wounds</a> should be covered with a sterile dressing until treatment can be given by a health professional</li> <li>✓ <b>bandages</b> can be wrapped around an <a href="#">injured joint</a> to support it</li> <li>✓ <b>medical tape</b> used to secure dressings. It can also be used to tape an <a href="#">injured finger</a> or toe to an uninjured one, creating a makeshift splint while you are waiting to see a doctor</li> <li>✓ <b>eyewash solution</b> to wash out grit or dirt in the <a href="#">eyes</a></li> <li>✓ <b>tweezers</b> for removing <a href="#">splinters</a></li> </ul> <p>Most prepacked first aid boxes will contain these.</p>	<p><b>When you get a common illness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have plenty of <b>rest</b></li> <li>• drink enough <b>fluids</b> to avoid thirst and dehydration</li> <li>• use a <b>tissue</b> and <b>wash your hands</b> well to help prevent the spread of your infection</li> <li>• talk to your community pharmacist for advice. Add your local pharmacy's number to your phonebook</li> </ul>																
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<p><b>click on illness to see treatment options and when you should seek help sooner</b></p>																	

**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.

**Oral rehydration salts:** Essential minerals and water are lost after a period of fever, [diarrhoea or vomiting](#). Oral rehydration salts can help to restore your body's natural balance of minerals and fluid. Alternatively, drink enough water to avoid thirst and prevent dehydration.

**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 can help control symptoms associated with [hay fever](#), allergies and reactions to [insect bites or stings](#)



**Medicine safety**

- Ask your community 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.