



Greater Manchester



Primary Care

Get To Know Where To Go

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Primary care is the day-to-day healthcare that's available close to where you live.

It is usually your first stop if you or your family are unwell or hurt. Primary care is focused on preventing illness, diagnosing health problems, helping to manage long term conditions, and treating health concerns that don't need hospital care.



Primary care includes services you will have heard of like your GP practice, community pharmacies (chemists), dentists and opticians (eye experts).

This booklet will tell you all you need to know about primary care services to help you and your family get the care you need from the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

Helping you get to know where to go.



Hello

Witaj

سلام

ਸਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ

您好!

Bonjour

Bună!

مرحبًا

Hola

হ্যালো

Ahlan



Need support accessing primary care?

Primary care teams are committed to ensuring there are no barriers to patients receiving the care they need – such as disability, mobility issues or communication challenges. Interpreters are available for GP and dental appointments, as well as some pharmacy services, but will need to be arranged in advance. If you need any adjustments to help you access care from your GP practice, local pharmacy or dental practice please let them know.



Your pharmacy

Pharmacists (or chemists) are healthcare professionals who can give expert advice on minor health problems and illnesses. They can also recommend over-the-counter medicines (medicines you can buy without a prescription).

You don't need an appointment to see a pharmacist and many pharmacies are open late and at weekends. Most have a private consultation room. If needed, they'll recommend seeing another healthcare professional. They can also help with questions about medication and make sure you're taking it correctly.

Some of the things pharmacists can help with:

- Coughs, colds and sore throats
- Tummy upsets
- Aches and pains
- Skin rashes
- Baby teething
- Nappy rash

Provided by some pharmacies:

- Emergency contraception
- Free blood pressure checks

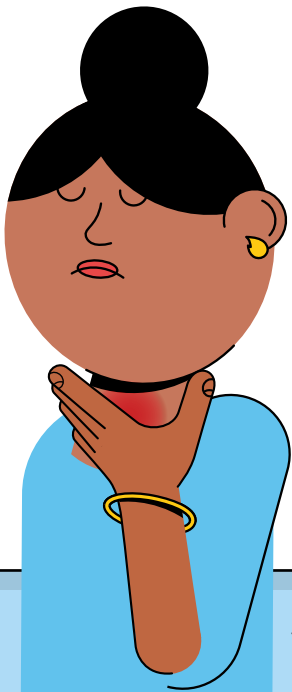
Most local pharmacies can now treat some common health problems and provide prescription medicine if needed – with no need for a GP appointment. This is called the Pharmacy First service.

Pharmacies can offer prescription medicine for:

- **Earache (aged 1 to 17 years)**
- **Impetigo (aged 1 year and over)**
- **Infected insect bites (aged 1 year and over)**
- **Shingles (aged 18 years and over)**
- **Sinusitis (aged 12 years and over)**
- **Sore throat (aged 5 years and over)**
- **Urinary tract infections or UTIs (women aged 16 to 64 years)**

If you go to a pharmacy with one of these conditions, the pharmacist will offer you advice, treatment or refer you to a GP or other health professional if needed. They will also update the health record held by your GP practice.

You may be asked to attend your local pharmacy for treatment by another health service such as NHS 111 or your GP practice.



Unwanted medicine

If your medicine is out of date, unwanted or you have some left over after you've stopped taking it, don't put it in your household bin or flush it down the toilet. Instead, take it to any pharmacy to be disposed of safely.



New Medicine Service

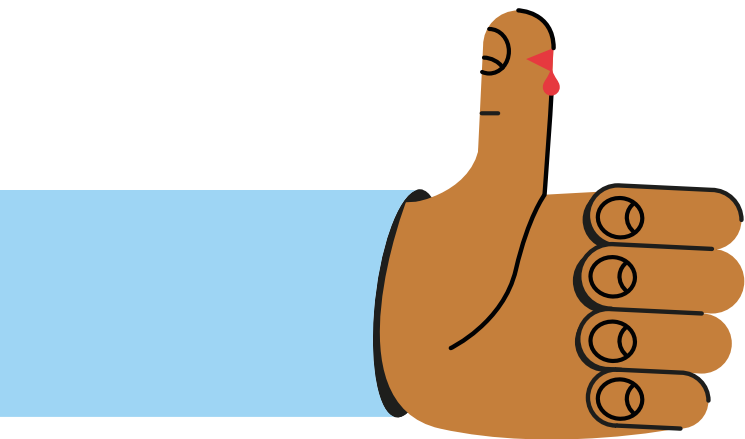
If you're prescribed a medicine to treat a long-term condition for the first time, you may be able to get extra help and advice about your medicine from your local pharmacist through a free scheme called the **New Medicine Service (NMS)**.



Scan to find out if you're eligible, or search 'NHS newly prescribed medicine'.

Minor Ailment Service

Everyone can go to their pharmacist for free advice or to buy medicine for a minor illness or injury. People who don't pay prescription charges, including children, may be able to get over-the-counter medicine for free through the NHS Minor Ailments Service.



This is medicine you would normally pay for to help with problems including allergies, vaginal thrush, diarrhoea or constipation, indigestion and heartburn, dry eyes, teething and mouth ulcers.

Not all pharmacies offer the NHS Minor Ailments Service so you will need to ask if your pharmacy is signed up.



**Scan to find a pharmacy
near you, or go to
www.nhs.uk/find-a-pharmacy**

Prescriptions

Ordering repeat prescriptions online

Most people now need to order their repeat prescriptions directly from their GP practice, instead of their local pharmacy doing it for them.

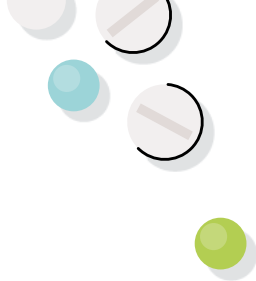
Ordering online is the safest and easiest way to order your regular medicines. It also means that you only order what you need, reducing waste and saving the NHS money.



You can do this on the NHS App or another online tool used by your GP practice.

The free NHS App can be downloaded to a mobile phone from the Apple App Store or Google Play. Find out more about the NHS App on page 40.

Don't worry if you can't order your repeat prescriptions online. You can still fill in the slip at the bottom of your paper prescription and take it to your GP practice.



Free prescriptions

Some people are eligible for free prescriptions.

This includes:

- **People aged 60 and over, under-16s and people aged 16 to 18 in full-time education**
- **Pregnant people and those who have had a baby in the last 12 months**
- **People on certain benefits**
- **People on a low income**

Medical Exemption Certificate

People with certain medical conditions like diabetes or cancer can get a Medical Exemption Certificate for free prescriptions.

Prescription Prepayment Certificate

If you pay for a lot of NHS prescriptions, it may be cheaper to buy a Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC).

A PPC covers all your NHS prescriptions, including NHS dental prescriptions, no matter how many items you need. It does not cover the cost of other health items, such as wigs and fabric supports.

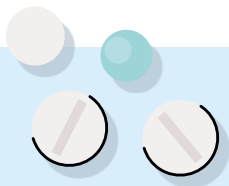
If you pay for more than 3 prescription items in 3 months, or 11 items in 12 months, you could save money.



NHS Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) Prescription Prepayment Certificate

If you pay for NHS prescribed HRT medicine 3 or more times in 12 months, an HRT Pre Payment Certificate could save you money.

The HRT PPC covers an unlimited number of certain HRT medicines for 12 months, regardless of why they are prescribed.



Scan the QR code for more information on help with NHS prescription costs, including eligibility. Or go to www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-help-health-costs

Tips for ordering your repeat prescriptions

Be organised and keep on top of what you need to order so you don't run out of your medicine, particularly if there's a bank holiday coming up.

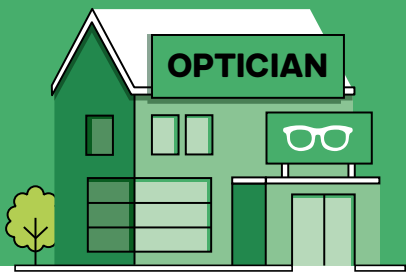
Remember:

- **It can take 5-7 working days for your medicines to be ready to collect. On the run up to bank holidays it typically takes longer**
- **Before ordering your repeat prescription, check what medicines you already have at home and only order what you need**
- **Attend your medication reviews**
- **Controlled drugs like morphine will only arrive at your pharmacy on the day they are due**

Your optician

Opticians are eye experts. They are your first stop to keep your eyes healthy through regular routine eye tests, or if you notice any change in your vision.

They can also make sure you have the right glasses or contact lenses if you need them.



Adults should have an eye test every two years, or more frequently if you are advised to do so. An eye test can help to spot problems or conditions like glaucoma or cataracts earlier.



Scan to find your nearest opticians providing NHS services, or go to www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-an-nhs-sight-test/location



Greater Manchester Urgent Eyecare Service

If you have any of the following problems, the Greater Manchester Urgent Eyecare Service can help – avoiding a trip to A&E or your GP!

- **A red or painful eye**
- **Something in your eye that won't come out**
- **Sudden change in vision**
- **Flashes or things floating across your eyes**

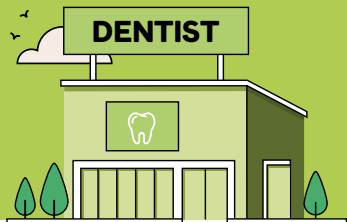


The service is available throughout the week, and at weekends and evenings at some locations (always call first as this is not a walk-in service).

You will be able to explain your eye problem to the optician. After that, you might be given self-care information, booked in for an appointment, referred to hospital eye services, or referred to your GP practice if you need help with other issues.



Call your local optician to use the service. If they don't take part in the service, scan the QR code to find one that does, or go to www.primaryeyecare.co.uk/find-a-practice



Your dentist

It's a good idea to have regular check-ups with a dentist to help prevent dental health problems, or spot them early on when they are simpler to treat. The time between check-ups can vary from 3 months to 2 years (or 1 year if you're under 18), depending on how healthy your teeth and gums are and your risk of future problems.

You can help to keep your teeth and gums healthy by brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, flossing each day to remove food and plaque from between your teeth, and cutting down on sugar in your diet. Children under 7 will need help to brush their teeth properly and little ones will need an adult to do it for them.

Did you know, patients are not registered with a dentist in the same way as they are with a GP? So, you can go to a dental practice outside your local community for a check-up or dental treatment.



Scan the QR code to find your nearest dental practice, or go to www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist



Greater Manchester Urgent Dental Care Service

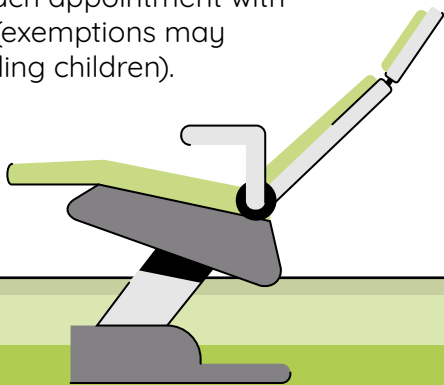
If you have pain in your mouth, teeth or gums, don't suffer – contact a dentist. Your GP practice won't be able to help. Contact your regular dentist if you have one. If they're closed, or you do not have a regular dentist, call the Greater Manchester Urgent Dental Care Service on 0333 332 3800.

This service is available from 8am to 10pm every day, including weekends and bank holidays.

Please be aware that this service can be busy, so you may need to wait, however your call will always be answered.

When you call, you will be assessed by a healthcare professional who may provide you with self-care advice for your symptoms, give safe pain relief advice, or book you a face-to-face appointment if needed. This can be at a location across Greater Manchester and you will be offered one that is most convenient for you. Please note that the service operates on an appointment only basis, does not offer a drop-in service, and does not offer routine care or check-ups.

There is an NHS patient charge of £27.40 for each appointment with this service (exemptions may apply, including children).





Get help with dental costs

Some people can get free dental care. This includes those under the age of 18 (or 19 if in full time education), pregnant people (up to 12 months after the baby has been born), and people on low-income benefits. Those who have a low income, but do not qualify for free dental care, may also be able to get help with paying part of the cost.



Scan to find out if you're eligible, or search 'NHS get help with dental costs'.

Your GP practice

This is usually the first place you go for medical help after you've tried self-care or seen a pharmacist.

Some illnesses or injuries can be difficult to deal with at home or you may feel you need a bit more help.



Your general practice can help with check-ups, treat common illnesses, give advice on staying healthy, and refer you to specialists if needed.

When you ask for an appointment, your GP practice will need some information about your condition or illness. This helps them to see people who are very unwell first and ensure you see the best person for your needs.

Your GP practice can provide care and advice for a wide range of things including:

- **Persistent cough (3 weeks or more)**
- **Ongoing sore throat (1 week or more)**
- **Continuing earache (3 days or more)**
- **Headaches that keep coming back**
- **Cystitis (water infection/UTI) that won't go away (3 days or more)**
- **A breast lump**
- **Blood in your wee or poo**
- **Worries about the menopause**
- **Feeling low or anxious**
- **Ongoing or long-term conditions**

Appointments may be online, on the phone, or face-to-face.

Local GP practices work together to offer evening and weekend appointments. Ask your GP practice for details.

Everyone in Greater Manchester can and should register with a GP practice, regardless of housing or immigration status.



Scan to find your nearest GP practice, or go to www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp



Who can help at your GP practice?

The people who work at your GP practice team all have different roles. Some are there to help things run smoothly, whilst others are health professionals with their own specialist skills. You won't always need to see a GP.



Scan to find out more about
your GP practice team, or go to
[www.gmintegratedcare.org.uk/
whoswhoatyourgp](http://www.gmintegratedcare.org.uk/whoswhoatyourgp)



GP out-of-hours service

The GP out-of-hours service is for health problems that can't wait until the next day. For details on how to contact the service, call your practice and listen to the recorded message.

When you call the service you may be given advice over the phone or a face-to-face appointment.

NHS App

If you're registered at a GP practice you can use the NHS App to manage your health the easy way on your smartphone or tablet, at any time.



You can:

- **Order repeat prescriptions**
- **Securely view your health records**
- **Check test results**
- **Book and view appointments (may not be available at all practices)**

Depending on your GP practice or hospital, you may be able to send and receive messages via the NHS App. If you turn on notifications (under Account, then Settings) the app will tell you when a new message comes in.

The NHS App doesn't replace existing services and you can still contact your GP practice in the usual ways, such as by phone or through their website.

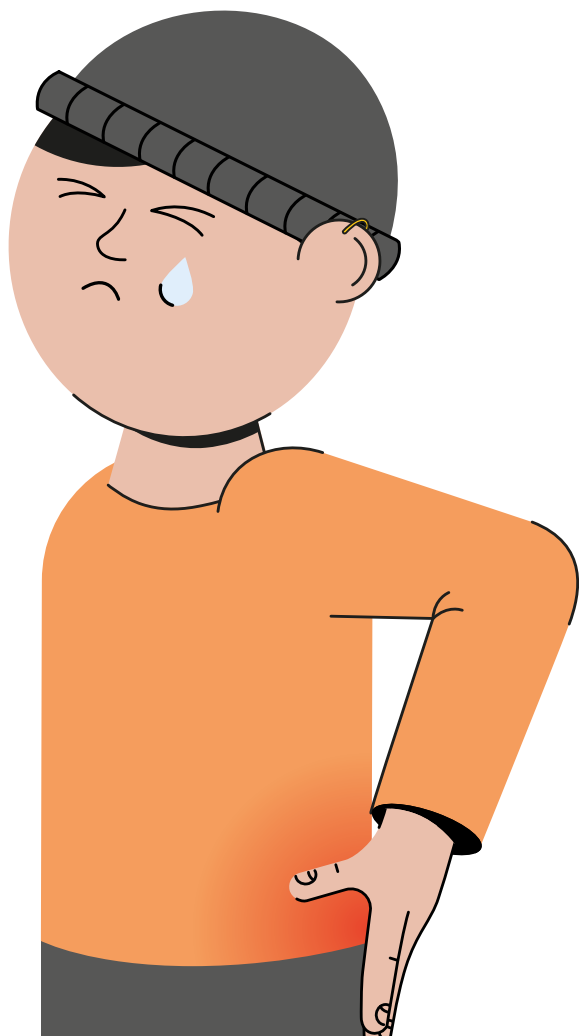
You must be aged 13 or over to use the NHS App.



Scan to find out more, or go to
www.nhs.uk/nhs-app

Managing pain

Pain can be unpleasant, stressful, and make day-to-day activities more difficult. Your local pharmacy can provide expert advice on pain relief, including over-the-counter medication. However, if the pain continues for more than 12 weeks you should contact your GP practice.



If you have pain in your mouth, teeth or gums, you will need to contact a dentist or the Greater Manchester Urgent Dental Care Service (see the ‘Your Dentist’ section on page 26 for more information).

When taking painkillers, including paracetamol products and ibuprofen, always follow the instructions on the packet, which will tell you how much you can safely take within a 24-hour period. Never take more than the maximum dose. Taking too much can be dangerous and you may need medical treatment.

If you accidentally overdose, call 111 immediately for advice, even if you feel well.



If you, or someone else, is showing signs of being seriously ill (e.g. being sick, breathlessness, seizures) you should call 999 or go to your nearest A&E.

While You Wait is there to support people with their physical and mental wellbeing while they wait for NHS treatment. It includes advice and tips on how to manage your condition and cope with pain.



Scan to find out more, or go to www.gmintegratedcare.org.uk/keep-well/while-you-wait



Doing things differently

Demand for primary care is increasing so we are transforming how we work.

A wider range of health professionals than ever is available close to where you live.



There are new ways to easily contact primary care if you have a health concern that isn't urgent. This includes the NHS App or an online consultation with your GP practice. These may be more convenient if you are busy, as they can fit around work, study or caring for loved ones.

You can help by using the right service at the right time. It will also mean you will get the help you need for you and your family as quickly as possible.

If you would like this information in another format, or translated into a different language, please email **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

如果您希望以其他格式获得此信息，或将其翻译成其他语言，请发送电子邮件至 **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

Jeżeli chciał(a)byś otrzymać te informacje w innym formacie lub w innej wersji językowej, prześlij wiadomość na adres **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

Pour obtenir ces informations dans un autre format ou dans une autre langue, veuillez adresser un e-mail à **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

إذا كنت ترغب في هذه المعلومات بتنسيق آخر، أو مترجمة إلى لغة أخرى، يرجى إرسال رسالة بالبريد الإلكتروني إلى **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

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اگر کسی اور فارمیٹ، میں یا کسی اور زبان میں ترجمہ شدہ آپ کو یہ معلومات چاہیے، تو براہ کرم پر ای میل **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

Haddii aad rabto in aad macluumaadkan ku hesho qaab kale, ama lagu soo turjumo luqad kale, fadlan fariin iimayl u dir **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

Dacă doriți aceste informații în alt format sau traduse într-o altă limbă, vă rugăm să trimiteți un e-mail la **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

আপনি যদি এই তথ্যটি অন্য ফর্ম্যাটে বা অন্য ভাষায় অনুবাদ করতে চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে এখানে ইমেলে করুন **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

Si desea recibir esta información en otro formato o que se traduzca a otro idioma, envíe un mensaje a la dirección **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

All information is correct at the time of going to print - November 2025.

