

THE 'SIMPLE NHS' GUIDE
by
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The NHS (National Health Service) is free at the point of delivery. Most people's contact with the NHS is initially through a GP (family doctor). This useful but developing website <http://www.nhs.uk/> offers a lot of information.

GPs – Family Doctors

Doctors surgeries (or GP practices) provide a wide range of family health services, including:

- advice on health problems
- vaccinations
- examinations and treatment
- prescriptions for medicines. The current charge is £6.85 per item.
- referrals to other health and social services

If your condition is non-urgent, you can expect to see a doctor within two working days or a health professional such as a nurse within one working day. If you don't need an appointment within two working days, you can also book in advance if this is more convenient for you.

Find the Doctors' Surgery nearest to you.

[Nearest Search](#)

Dentists

Most dentists operate as independent practitioners and charge for treatment although some also offer NHS treatment. There are three standard charges for all NHS dental treatment. This makes it easier to know how much you may need to pay and also helps ensure that you are being charged for NHS care (rather than private care).

The maximum charge for a complex course of treatment is **£194**.

Most courses of treatment cost **£15.90** or **£43.60**.

You still receive free NHS dental treatment if you meet the [exemption criteria](#).

Find the Dental Services nearest to you.

[Nearest Search](#)

Pharmacies

Pharmacists are experts on medicines and how they work. They can also offer advice on common complaints such as coughs, colds, aches and pains and other health issues.

They can help you decide whether you need to see a doctor. You can talk to your pharmacists in confidence - even about the most personal symptoms and you don't need to make an appointment.

Find the Pharmacy nearest to you.

[Nearest Search](#)

Contraception

These clinics give advice on contraception and pregnancy to people of all ages. There's usually one in every town where you can get: -

- free contraception including free condoms
- emergency contraception and pregnancy tests, and
- if you are pregnant there will be someone you can talk to

In central London, the Margaret Pyke Centre provides a full NHS contraceptive service and is open to all and free of charge.

73 Charlotte Street

London

W1T 4PL

Tel **020 7530 3600**

<http://www.margaretpyke.org/>

Sexual Health

If you've had unprotected sex or are worried that you might have come into contact with a sexually transmitted infection you can get free and confidential advice and treatment from special clinics.

To find your nearest clinic please click here

<http://www.fpa.org.uk/finder/>

NHS Walk-in Centres

Fast 'no-appointment' advice and treatments for minor conditions

NHS Walk-in Centres give you quick and easy access to health advice and treatment for minor illnesses and injuries.

These are often situated near A&E and in convenient locations such as high streets and train stations. They are run by experienced NHS nurses and you don't need to make an appointment. Most are open seven days a week, from early in the morning until late in the evening, and offer a variety of services, such as:

- Assessment by an NHS nurse.
- Treatment for minor illnesses (including coughs, colds and infections) and for minor injuries (such as cuts, sprains and strains).

Find the NHS Walk-in Centre nearest to you.

[Nearest Search](#)

Hospitals

Find the Hospital nearest to you.

[Nearest Search](#)

Accident & Emergency (A&E)

To find your nearest A&E, enter your postcode and the search will return a list of the units closest to you. [Accident & Emergency search](#)

NHS Direct

24-hour confidential nurse-led health advice over the phone

You can call **NHS Direct** on **0845 46 47** for confidential health advice and information 24-hours a day. The lines are staffed by nurses and professional advisors.

[NHS Direct Online](#), makes a lot of health information and advice available through the internet, including a detailed [Self-help guide](#).

The website will also help you find your local GP, dental, pharmacy and optician services. NHS Direct Interactive digital TV has also been launched and makes health advice and information available through satellite television, by pressing the interactive button on your TV remote control. The website also has information in a number of languages including Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, Bengali, Urdu.

PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Services)

PALS provide information, advice and support to help patients, families and their carers. You can locate PALS throughout the country by using the website's online directory [search the directory](#)

Travel health

'Fitfortravel' is the NHS public access website providing a country-by-country guide to travel health information and much more. The website is aimed at those travelling abroad and contains essential information for staying healthy.

<http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk/>