

Self Care suggestions from the East Lancs CCG Website

What is self-care?

Self-care means keeping fit and healthy, as well as knowing how to take medicines, treat minor ailments and seek help when you need it. If you have a long-term condition, self-care is about understanding that condition and how to live with it.

Many patients make appointments to see their doctor or nurse, when they could be using a well-stocked medicines cabinet or visiting a local pharmacist to treat their symptoms – and getting the same help or advice a lot quicker. Self-care is the very best choice you can make for treating very minor illnesses and injuries.

Why is self-care good for you?

Empowering people with the confidence and information to look after themselves when they can, and visit the GP when they need to, gives people greater control of their own health and encourages healthy behaviours that help prevent ill health in the long-term.

In many cases people can take care of their minor ailments, reducing the number of GP consultations and enabling GPs to focus on caring for higher risk patients, such as those with comorbidities (more than one condition), the very young and elderly, managing long-term conditions and providing new services.

What should you have in your medicines cabinet?

You can be prepared for most common ailments by keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home. This includes:

- **Anti-diarrhoea** tablets — Diarrhoea is caused by a range of things, such as food poisoning or a stomach virus, and can happen without warning. The most common anti-diarrhoeal is loperamide (sold under the names Imodium, Arret and Diasorb, among others). It works by slowing down the action of your gut. Don't give anti-diarrhoeals to children under 12 because they may have undesirable side effects. Speak to your GP or pharmacist for advice about a child with these symptoms
- **Antihistamines** — These are useful for dealing with allergies and insect bites. They're also helpful if you have hay fever

- **First aid kit** — This can help treat minor cuts, sprains and bruises, and reduce the risk of cuts becoming infected. It should contain the following items:
 - o **bandages** – these can support injured limbs, such as a sprained wrist, and also apply direct pressure to larger cuts before being treated in hospital
 - o **plasters** – a range of sizes, waterproof if possible
 - o **thermometer** – digital thermometers that you put in your mouth produce very accurate readings; a thermometer placed under the arm is a good way to read a baby or young child’s temperature
 - o **antiseptic** – this can be used to clean cuts before they’re dressed (bandaged) and most can treat a range of conditions, including insect stings, ulcers and pimples; alcohol-free antiseptic wipes are useful to clean cuts
 - o **eyewash solution** – this will help wash out grit or dirt in the eyes
 - o **sterile dressings** – larger injuries should be covered with a sterile dressing to prevent infection until treatment can be given by a health professional
 - o **medical tape** – this is used to secure dressings and can also be used to tape an injured finger to an uninjured one, creating a makeshift splint
 - o **tweezers** – for taking out splinters; if splinters are left in, they can cause discomfort and become infected
- **Indigestion treatment** - If you have stomach ache, heartburn or trapped wind, a simple antacid will reduce stomach acidity and bring relief
- **Oral rehydration salts** — Fever, diarrhoea and vomiting make us lose water and essential minerals, and can lead to dehydration
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- **Pain relief** — such as aspirin, paracetamol and ibuprofen. These are highly effective at relieving most minor aches and pains, such as headaches and menstrual pain. Aspirin must not be given to children under 16