



Your Essential Guide to Getting the Right Treatment – 2008



With the NHS nowadays, there are lots of choices. By making the right choice at the right time, you will get the best possible treatment. Next time you or a family member are feeling unwell, and you are not sure what to do, use this handy checklist to help you to decide.

Can you treat yourself at home?

A well-stocked medicine cabinet will help you to treat many everyday illnesses at home.

For example, a small supply of paracetamol or ibuprofen (available as syrup for children) and other remedies will help you treat common ailments such as coughs, colds and sore throats. If your symptoms worsen, it is worth checking with your pharmacist for immediate over the counter advice before booking an appointment at your GP surgery.

A wide range of information on dealing with anxiety and stress, as well as depression, can be found on the Primary Mental Health Service website at www.pmhtglos.org.uk or in the self help guide, 'The Little Book of Mental Health' available from local GP surgeries or Health Promotion Resources Tel: 08454 226082.



Self Care →

Before you ring the GP – think Pharmacist!

While there are no miraculous cures for flu and other winter ills, you can keep yourself fighting fit and ready to win the cold war with a healthy dose of good advice from your local pharmacist.

Pharmacists are experts on medicines and how they work. They are qualified to give advice on common complaints, such as coughs, colds, flu, sore throats, aches and pains, sprains and stomach upsets.

They can also answer any questions about



Pharmacist →



medicines and other issues, such as healthy eating and giving up smoking. Your pharmacist can advise you when your symptoms are more serious and may suggest you visit your GP or Practice Nurse.

Always check the expiry date on medicines and return any unused or unwanted medicines to the pharmacy. When buying over-the-counter remedies, tell the pharmacist if you are pregnant or breast feeding, if you have other medical conditions or if you are taking other medicines (prescribed or bought).

Your GP Surgery

The local GP Surgery has become the favourite first port of call for patients who are feeling unwell, but many people don't realise the range of healthcare options available to them.

The vast majority of winter health conditions are caused by viruses with symptoms which will last a short length of time and which cannot be treated with antibiotics. Most people should get the advice they need from their local pharmacist or from NHS Direct on **0845 46 47** (www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk).

If you have a 'flare up' of a long standing illness such as kidney or lung disease, bronchitis, asthma or diabetes; that is not responding to self care or advice from your pharmacist; a call to your GP Surgery is the best course of action to take.

If you have followed self help advice, but remain concerned with your mental health and the impact this is having on your daily routine e.g. work or relationships, then make contact with your GP surgery.

GPs are experts in family medicine. If you are worried about the health of your child they are the best people to call.

If you need advice when your surgery is closed, consider calling NHS Direct on **0845 46 47** or if it is an urgent medical matter that can't wait until the GP surgery re-opens call the Gloucestershire 'Out of Hours' Service on **08454 220 220**.

If you book an appointment to see your GP, but later realise you will be unable to make it or no longer need it, please tell the surgery receptionist as soon as possible.



Finally, GPs are often asked by patients for sick notes when they need time off work due to ill health. It's worth remembering that under normal circumstances patients will only need a sick note if they need to be off work for more than one working week. For shorter periods of sickness people can self-certificate.

If you need urgent treatment or care 'Out of Hours' that can't wait until the GP surgery re-opens you only need to ring one number for help – **08454 220 220**.

'Out of Hours' is the period of time between 6.30pm and 8am on weekdays and covers all day and night at weekends and public holidays.

To ensure that patients benefit from quick access to help, please do NOT use this number for prescriptions, test results or routine matters – it is for URGENT 'OUT OF HOURS' medical matters only.

Contacting this number will put you through to specially trained NHS staff who are used to dealing with confidential medical information. They will make sure that you receive the right advice and help quickly.

During this call, these staff will either:

- pass the call to a doctor or nurse who may be able to deal with the medical problem over the telephone
- offer you advice on self care or connect you to NHS Direct
- refer you to a local Primary Care Centre (PCC – a place where doctors and nurses see people who require urgent treatment or care 'Out of Hours')
- call out a member of the on-call team, who will carry out a home visit if there is a need. Remember – if you no longer require a home visit please contact the 'Out of Hours' service to let them know so that they can send the on-call team to see another patient
- or, in an emergency send out an ambulance.

The 'Out of Hours' service is run by dedicated 'Out of Hours' staff including doctors, specialist nurses and other health and social care workers.



Minor Injury & Illness Units (MIUs) →

Minor Injury & Illness Units (MIUs) based at the local hospitals in Berkeley, Cinderford (Dilke), Cirencester, Lydney, Moreton-in-Marsh, Stroud and Tewkesbury provide a variety of services to people who are unwell or to people who have had accidents. The size of each Unit, the opening hours and the range of services available varies across the county, so if you're unsure whether it's right for you, contact the Hospitals direct (you can write the details in the space below) or telephone NHS Direct on **0845 46 47**. If you, a family member or friend require emergency care, contact 999 (see section below).



Hospital:

MIU Opening hours:

Telephone number:

Accident and Emergency (A&E) →

Do I need to go to a hospital A&E Department or call 999?

On a typical day in the NHS, hospital Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments in Gloucestershire will treat more than 500 people.

To help A&E departments to cope effectively it is important that people use them properly and think carefully about whether or not their condition or illness is an emergency.



An emergency is a critical or life threatening situation, which may include loss of consciousness, severe breathing difficulties, deep wounds such as stab wounds, severe chest pain or heavy loss of blood.

If emergency care is required a trip to A&E or a 999 call for an ambulance is the right course of action to take. If patients use the Ambulance Service unnecessarily they may be preventing others with life-threatening conditions from getting immediate care.

If the situation is less critical and you are unsure whether to seek medical help, call NHS Direct on **0845 46 47** for advice.

Have you tried NHS Direct?

You can call NHS Direct on **0845 46 47**, any time, for advice on what to do if you or a family member feels ill.

NHS Direct is a confidential 24-hour advice and health information service staffed by nurses and professional advisers.

NHS Direct also provides information on particular health conditions, self-help or support organisations and local health services (such as your nearest GP, dentist or 'Out of Hours' pharmacy).

NHS Direct has an excellent website providing on-line information and advice at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk.



NHS Direct →

Dental Services →

To find a dentist in your area contact the Dental Information Line on **08454 220 505**.

The Information Line is available 24 hours a day and gives details of available NHS dentists and the relevant numbers for emergency treatment. Callers will need to be aware that this is a recorded message which is updated regularly to include all current information. If you require emergency pain relief Out of Hours call: **08451 207179**.



The information in this leaflet is also available on the Internet at www.glospct.nhs.uk

For more copies, call 0845 658 3802.

Anyone wishing to receive a copy of this publication in large print or Braille should contact the Communications Team on 0845 658 3802.

To receive this information in these other languages please write to:

এ তথ্য বাংলায় পেতে হলে দয়া করে এ ঠিকানায় লিখুন:

如要索取中文訊息，請致信：

ગુજરાતીમાં આ માહિતી મેળવવા માટે કૃપા કરી અહીં લખો:

Aby otrzymać tę informację w języku polskim, prosimy :
zwrócić się na piśmie do:

یہ معلومات اردو میں حاصل کرنے کیلئے، برائے مہربانی لکھیں:

FREEPOST RRKK-ULGG-ESSA,
GUIDE & PALS, Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust HQ, Gloucester
Business Park, Brockworth, Gloucester.

Gloucestershire NHS Stop Smoking Service

Support to Stop!

**Need help in breaking
away from Smoking?**

Call 08454 220040

We can help

Gloucestershire



Health Services

www.gloshealthservices.org.uk

Print date: Summer 2008.

Produced by the Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust.