

Common questions that patients may ask

Q What is this new service about?

We want to offer you the best care from the right person. Often you can best be helped by a pharmacist, you will be offered a consultation with a community pharmacist locally.

Q Why are you doing this?

Pharmacists are qualified healthcare professionals and experts in medicines. They can offer clinical advice and over-the-counter medicines for all sorts of minor illnesses, and consultation can be arranged quickly and at a time to suit you. This in turn frees up GP appointments for those people with more complex symptoms who really need to see a GP.

Q What happens when I see the community pharmacist?

We will share your personal details with the pharmacist and details of your minor illness, and we will give you the pharmacy contact details so you can arrange your consultation on the same day if appropriate, or at a time that suits you.

You may be seen in person in a private consulting room, if the pharmacist thinks it appropriate, or your consultation may be carried out remotely via high quality video call or over the phone. You will be asked about your medical history and symptoms and current medication; in the same way the GP would ask you about them. Usually, the pharmacist will provide you with advice and can sell you with an over-the-counter product where needed, if you choose or if you require treatment for any of the 7 clinical conditions a medication will be issued. They will also send details of your consultation back to us for our records. If the pharmacist feels you need to be seen by a GP urgently, they will call us to ensure you are seen, or they will advise you to contact the hospital Emergency Department if deemed necessary. You may also be referred back to us to arrange a non-urgent appointment or follow up.

Q What if I get free prescriptions from my GP?

Your pharmacist will provide you with advice on how to treat your symptoms, which may include a medicine or product. Medicines that can be purchased in a pharmacy to treat minor illnesses, are usually inexpensive and would not normally be prescribed by your GP anyway. You are free to choose if you wish to make a purchase or not.

For the clinical conditions you may be offered medication at the pharmacy, you will need to pay normal prescription charges or if you are exempt there is no charge, but you will need to state what exemption you have.

Q What happens if I don't want to see the pharmacist?

We want to ensure that you are offered an appointment with the most appropriate qualified health care professional based on your symptoms. If you have minor illness symptoms that can be treated the same day through a consultation with a qualified community pharmacist, but do not want to accept this referral, you will be offered a routine appointment with your GP at a future date.

Q What if the patient is my child?

Children aged over one years are eligible to use this service and can be seen by the pharmacist. Children who are able to make their own decision about their health may be seen unaccompanied.