



## Toolkit – Accessing medical support

### Is your GP always the best person to speak to for any medical issue?

No, there are many other ways to access medical help that may be more appropriate to your needs.

**Pharmacists** can recognise many common health complaints. They can give advice or, where appropriate, medicine. If your problem is more serious and needs the attention of a GP, your pharmacist will recognise this and advise you to see your GP instead.

It can sometimes be quicker to arrange to speak with a **nurse practitioner** within your GP practice, who can also prescribe medication.

### Dental problems?

See your **dentist**. GPs are advised not to treat patients with dental conditions. If you are not registered with a dentist, or if you need emergency out-of-hours treatment, you can ring NHS 111 for more information on your nearest facility.

### Accident or injury, or think you may need an X-ray?

Visit your local urgent care unit Or walk in centre, to find your nearest call NHS 111

### Chest pain, suspected stroke, bleeding or other life threatening emergencies? Ring 999

#### Go to your GP or a walk-in centre for:

- illness
- wound and dressing care
- muscle and joint injuries, including strains and sprains
- minor lacerations and cuts
- infected wounds

#### Go to A&E for the following:

- head injuries or loss of consciousness
- suturing (stitches)
- foreign bodies
- suspected broken bones or heavy blood loss
- persistent chest pain or difficulty breathing
- overdose or poisoning

If an injury is not serious, you can get help from a minor injury unit (MIU) or walk in centre, rather than going to an A&E department.

*\*Information taken from NHS Choices website*



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### Who to call - differences between 999 and 111

**'999'** – This is the emergency telephone number to get emergency assistance from Ambulance, Fire, Police, Mountain/Cave Rescue, Bomb Disposal (military) or Coast Guard services. Calls are always free and 'piggyback' on all telephone networks to increase the chance of a successful connection.

**'112'** – Calling '112' gives access to all of the same services as '999'. This is a universal number that gives access to the emergency services in the entire European Union and many other countries including the USA.

**'111'** – This is used to get access to non-emergency health services. An advisor will ask you several questions to find the best service for you. This may be a GP out of hours' service, the use of a minor injuries or A&E department, as well as many other services. In some cases, the advisor may still send an ambulance, if this is the best care for you. This number is free from all telephones.

**'101'** – This is for non-emergency police services. The number is national but will direct calls to the local police force. It is recommended to be used when there is no crime in progress and no one is in danger e.g. you find that your car has been stolen. These calls cost 15p per minute from any telephone.

Fire services do not have a non-emergency number as they no longer deal with pets stuck in trees (R.S.P.C.A. can help with that)! However, some Fire & Rescue services encourage the use of local numbers for any non-emergency requirement. These can be found on the website of the local Fire service



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### If you do need to visit your GP; What are the roles of GP surgery staff:

#### **GP**

A General Practitioner (GP) is your family doctor, GPs are highly skilled doctors who support patients throughout their lives. They help you to manage your health and prevent illness and are trained in all aspects of general medicine. This includes child health, mental health, adult medicine, the diagnosis and management of acute medical and surgical problems and the management of long term health conditions such as diabetes and asthma.

#### **Practice manager**

Practice managers are involved in managing all of the business aspects of the practice such as making sure that the right systems are in place to provide a high quality of patient care, human resources, finance, patient safety, premises and equipment and information technology. They support GPs and other medical professionals with delivering patient services and also help to develop extended services to enhance patient care.

#### **Reception staff**

Receptionists provide an important link for patients with the practice and are your initial contact point for general enquiries. They can provide basic information on services and results and direct you to the right person depending on your health issue or query. Receptionists make most of the patient appointments with the GPs and nurses.

#### **Practice nurse**

Practice nurses are qualified and registered nurses. They can help with health issues such as family planning, healthy living advice, blood pressure checks and dressings. Practice nurses usually run clinics for long-term health conditions such as asthma or diabetes. Nurses can have additional skills and train as nurse practitioners. Some nurses can prescribe medication and are called nurse independent or supplementary practitioners. Other nurses may run minor ailment clinics and most practice nurses carry out cervical smears. Monitoring of long-term conditions such as asthma, diabetes and hypertension.

#### **Healthcare assistants (HCA)**

Healthcare assistants support practice nurses with their daily work and carry out tasks such as phlebotomy (drawing blood), blood pressure measurement and new patient checks. They may act as a chaperone when a patient or doctor requests one.



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### Other medical services available:

#### Pharmacist

Pharmacists play a key role in providing quality healthcare. They're experts in medicines, and use their clinical expertise, together with their practical knowledge, to advise you on common problems, such as coughs, colds, aches and pains, as well as healthy eating and stopping smoking.

Your pharmacist may be able to help with:

- skin conditions, such as mild acne and mild eczema
- coughs and colds, including nasal congestion and sore throat
- minor cuts and bruises
- constipation and haemorrhoids (piles)
- hay fever and allergies
- aches and pains, such as headaches, earache and back pain
- indigestion, diarrhoea and threadworms
- period pain and thrush
- warts and verrucas, mouth ulcers and cold sores
- athlete's foot
- nappy rash and teething

#### Urgent treatment centre / Walk in clinic

Urgent treatment centres are a facility you can go to if you need urgent medical attention but it's not a life-threatening situation.

At the moment, the NHS offers a mix of walk-in centres, urgent care centres, minor injury units and urgent treatment centres, all with different levels of service.

By the end of 2019, these will all be called urgent treatment centres.

Urgent treatment centres are GP-led and open for at least 12 hours a day every day of the week (including bank holidays).

You may be referred to an urgent treatment centre by NHS 111 or by your GP. You can also just turn up and walk in.

Conditions that can be treated at an urgent treatment centre include:

- sprains and strains
- suspected broken limbs
- minor head injuries
- cuts and grazes
- bites and stings
- minor scalds and burns
- ear and throat infections
- skin infections and rashes
- eye problems
- coughs and colds
- feverish illness in adults
- feverish illness in children