# Self Care FAQs - General Public

| **Question** | **Answer** |
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|  | What is self-care? | Self-care is about looking after yourself in a healthy way. It can be anything from brushing your teeth, doing some exercise, managing common conditions (also called minor ailments) like headaches, colds and flu or living with a long-term health problem, such as asthma or diabetes. |
|  | Why should I self-care? | For most people, common conditions are not serious health problems and can be treated without the need to see a doctor.It is much easier and often much quicker to self-care, as medication is low cost and can be obtained from your local Pharmacy or even the supermarket or local shop. |
|  | What if I need advice? | We appreciate not all people have knowledge on how to treat a minor condition and often people visit their doctor as they just want to know how to relieve the symptoms or know how long they will last.All this information can be obtained from your local pharmacy. The Pharmacist is highly trained and will be able to offer advice and support in managing minor conditions as well as providing advice on what to do if symptoms do not get better. |
|  | Where can I find information | There are lots of places you can get information on self-care. For face to face information you can visit your local pharmacy.For written advice you can visit a number of websites; [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk/), [www.selfcareforum.org.uk](http://www.selfcareforum.org.uk/) |
|  | I’m afraid to self-care, what if it goes wrong? | Doing something new can be scary, if you are worried about self-care visit your local pharmacy for advice. They are highly trained professionals and will be able to support you to self-care. The Pharmacist will ask you a number of questions about your symptoms and will only offer the self-care route if they feel it is suitable. If they feel it is not ok for you to self-care they will let you know and advise what you should do next.You can visit a pharmacy anytime for advice, many pharmacies are open late see the NHS Choices website to find your nearest pharmacy.The more you self-care the more confident you will become.  |
|  | What about people on a low income? | People on a limited or low income are not exempt from self-care. Many minor conditions can be treated at a low cost. |
|  | What about people who do not usually pay for prescriptions? | People who receive their prescriptions at no cost are not exempt from self-care. Many minor conditions can be treated at a low cost. |
|  | What about people in Care Homes or with carers who administer medication? | The CCG has evaluated self-care in this area. Due to many Care Homes not having policies in place as well as ‘ad-hoc’ nature of self-care have decided to excluded people in Care Homes or who have paid carers visiting to administer medication from self-care. Also people in Care Homes/ receiving care are classed as ‘vulnerable’. |
|  | What about patients living in rural areas with limited access to a pharmacy and pharmacy medicines? | Patients may already travel to see GP or pick up medication.For those patients who get medication delivered due to ill health or inability to get out of the house, they would be classed as vulnerable and therefore exempt. |
|  | Can I still go and see my GP or nurse? | Self-care isn’t about stopping you seeing your GP or Nurse. If you are worried about your symptoms and you haven’t seen an improvement after self-care at home, your GP Practice is the next step. |
|  | Is it more expensive for the NHS to prescribe these medicines than it is for someone to buy them? | Yes. Although the NHS works hard to source the most cost-effective medicines, when they are prescribed we have to pay for all the administrative costs involved. For example, we have to pay doctors and pharmacists for their work and cover the cost of prescription pads, medicines bottles and other consumables. We also have to pay the NHS staff who calculate how much money doctors and pharmacists should receive.When someone buys a medicine OTC instead, the NHS doesn’t have to pay these costs, or the cost of the medicine itself. This means that we can then spend that money on treatments and services to help improve the NHS |
|  | Are there no other ways in which the NHS could save money? | Stopping the inappropriate prescribing of OTC medicines is now part of national plans from NHS England. In general these OTC medications are low-cost items easily available for purchase – and stopping prescribing saves not just the cost of the medicines themselves but also NHS costs through the entire process:* professional costs and time of GP/nurse to generate the prescription
* professional costs and time to dispense the medicines
* transportation costs for completed prescriptions to be sent to NHS Business Service Authority (NHSBSA)
* professional cost and time for NHSBA to record and process prescriptions, pay pharmacists and report back to the CCG
* professional cost and time for CCG staff to analyse prescribing data generated from prescriptions

The CCG is responsible for using public money in the most cost effective way to fund services based on the greatest need for our wider community. We therefore have to prioritise prescribing and services based on clinical need and evidence-based outcomes for patients whilst managing the continuing cost pressures. |
|  | I have been to my pharmacy to buy a medicine but they will not sell it to me. What do I do? | There will be some situations where a pharmacist feels it would not be appropriate to sell you a medicine, based on the information you provide and on their professional judgement. If this is the case the pharmacist should explain why, and advise on what you should do. |