

# Your Health

The National Health Service (NHS)



This leaflet explains how the National Health Service (NHS) works in the United Kingdom

The National Health Service provides health care in the UK.  
All medical care is confidential.

## How do I get help with my health?



If you are ill or worried about your health or the health of anyone in your family, you should go to see your local doctor, called a General Practitioner (GP). The GP's clinic is called a surgery or a health centre. You should register with a GP in your area as soon as possible so that you can get medical care if you need it. To register you will need to give your name, date of birth, address and telephone number if you have one.

## How do I make an appointment?



Before you visit your GP or one of the nurses at the Surgery you will usually need to make an appointment in person or by telephone. You can ask to see a male or female doctor or nurse, although this may not always be possible.

## What if I do not speak English?



If you need an interpreter you must tell the receptionist when you make the appointment which language you speak and they will book an interpreter for you or get an interpreter on the phone. It is important that you and the doctor understand each other so that he/she can make an accurate diagnosis of your problem.

## Who else works with my GP?



- Nurses take care of many health needs including vaccinations, contraception advice, chronic illnesses such as diabetes and can give general health advice.
- Midwives look after pregnant women and their new born babies. Care before the birth of the baby is called 'ante-natal' and after the birth is called 'post-natal'.
- Health Visitors are nurses who specialise in the care of children and their families and in helping people to stay healthy. They may come and visit you at your home.

## When your GP surgery is closed



GP surgeries are usually open from 8am to 6.30pm Monday- Friday. At all other times phone 111.

The out-of-hours period is from 6.30pm to 8am on weekdays and all day at weekends and on bank holidays.

If it is not a serious emergency then call 111. 111 is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It can provide medical advice and details of the best local service that can provide care. Telephone consultations and triage (an assessment of how urgent your medical problem) is an important part of all out-of-hours care.

If your first language is not English then please tell the person on the other end of the telephone your spoken language.

## Dental care



If you have a problem with your teeth you should see a dentist. To receive NHS dental treatment you need to register with a NHS dentist. If you have trouble registering with a dentist you can contact the Oxfordshire Dental Helpline 01865 337267. A charge may be made for dental care.

## Eyesight



If you need your eyesight testing or need new glasses (spectacles) make an appointment to see an optician. They have shops in most town centres. A charge may be made for eye care.

## Pharmacies



Pharmacies or chemists can provide a wide range of remedies which can be bought for many simple complaints like coughs, colds, sore throats and upset stomachs. Many larger supermarkets now have pharmacy departments. Pharmacists can give you advice for minor complaints and also handle prescriptions for medicines which your GP may give you to treat your illness or injury. There is usually a charge for these but some people are entitled to free prescriptions eg people over 60, women expecting babies or people on benefits.

## Useful contacts



### NHS 111

**111**

If you need medical help fast NHS 111 will direct you straight away to the local service that can help you best.

### NHS England National Contact Centre

**0300 3112233**

Advice on how to register with a GP or dentist  
Problems with your GP or dentist

### NHS Oxfordshire Dental Helpline

**01865 337267**

Help to find a dentist

### Dental Services Out of Hours

**111**

Emergency dental advice or treatment when your dentist is closed

### NHS Choices Web-site

**[www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx)**

On-line information about services near you

### Serious Emergency Services:

**999**

Ambulance, Police or Fire Services

### Patient Services

**0800 0526088**

A confidential helpline covering many NHS issues



Your health service can use an interpreter if you do not speak English

**NHS**  
Oxfordshire  
Clinical Commissioning Group

**LanguageLine**  
Solutions™

My preferred language is

But I also speak ..... and need an interpreter to help me communicate with you.

Please call LanguageLine on:

**0845 603 7915**

