

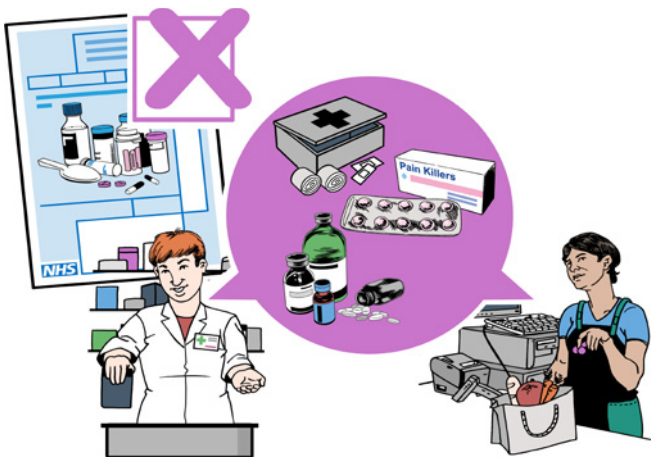
Prescribing of 'over the counter'  
medicines is changing



NHS England held a consultation on some changes to prescribing medication you can buy over the counter.



This medication can be bought over the counter at a pharmacy or supermarket. It is for minor illnesses anyone can treat at home with the right information.

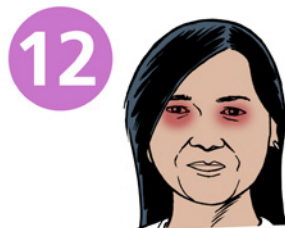
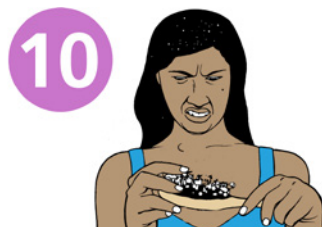
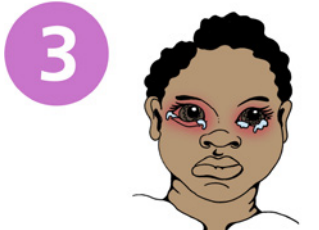
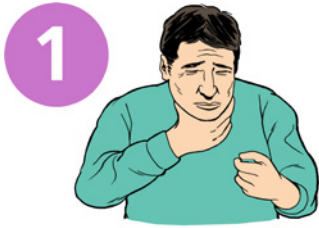


After the consultation, NHS England has asked local NHS organisations, who plan and buy health services, to think about what they should do in their area.

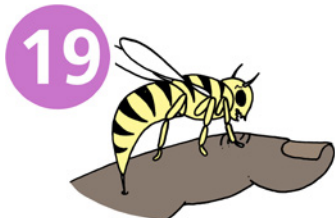
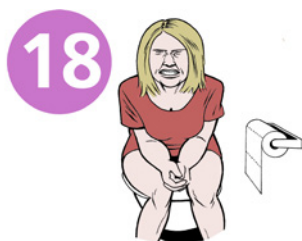


This leaflet will explain the changes that local health organisations need to think about. It explains why they are happening and where you can get more information and support.

# Which minor illnesses are included?



1. Acute sore throat
2. Cold sores
3. Conjunctivitis
4. Coughs and colds and nasal congestion
5. Cradle cap
6. Haemorrhoids
7. Infant colic
8. Mild cystitis
9. Contact dermatitis (allergic rash)
10. Dandruff
11. Diarrhoea in adults
12. Dry eyes / sore tired eyes



13. Earwax

14. Sweating too much

15. Head lice

16. Indigestion and heartburn

17. Infrequent migraines

18. Infrequent constipation

19. Insect bites and stings

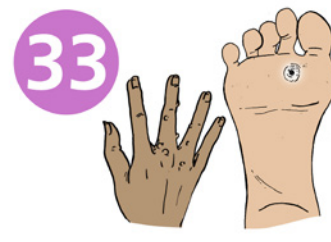
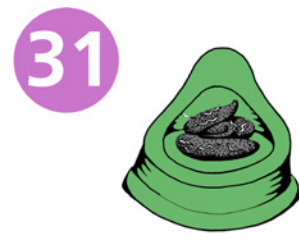
20. Mild acne

21. Mild dry skin/sunburn

22. Mild to moderate hay fever

23. Minor burns and scalds





24. Conditions which are not serious but might cause pain or fever. For example sprains, headaches, period pain or back pain.

25. Mouth ulcers

26. Nappy rash

27. Oral thrush

28. Prevention of tooth decay

29. Ringworm or athletes foot

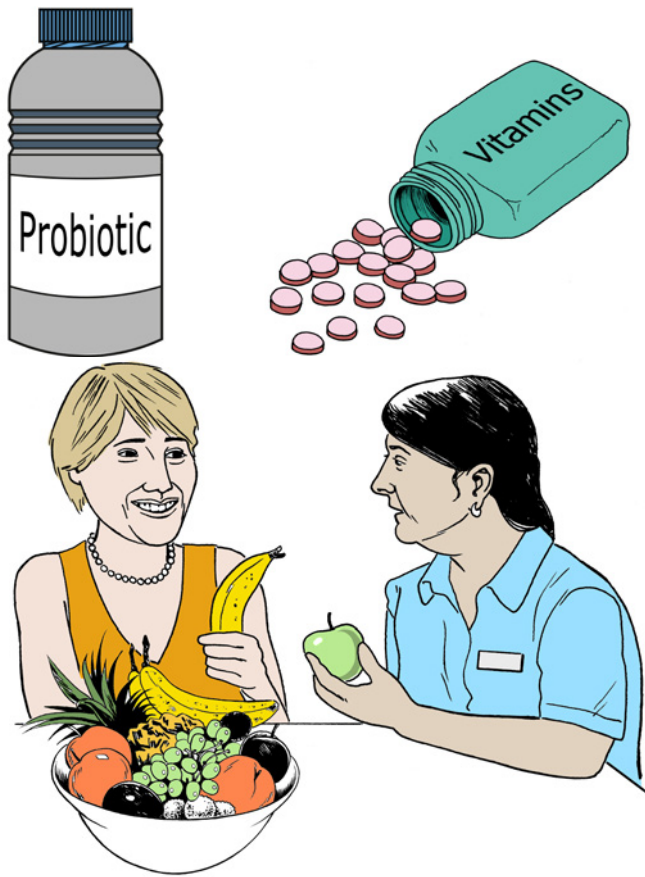
30. Teething or mild toothache

31. Threadworms

32. Travel sickness

33. Warts and verrucas

# Other medicines you can get over the counter from a local pharmacy or supermarket:



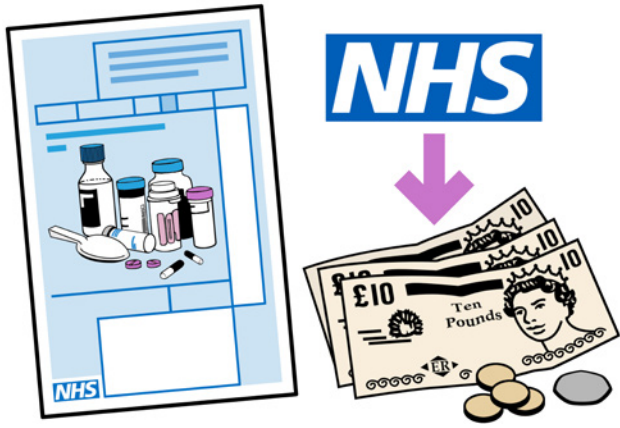
Probiotics and some vitamins and minerals will also not be prescribed unless really necessary.

This is because you can and should get these from eating healthily.

## Why are these changes happening?



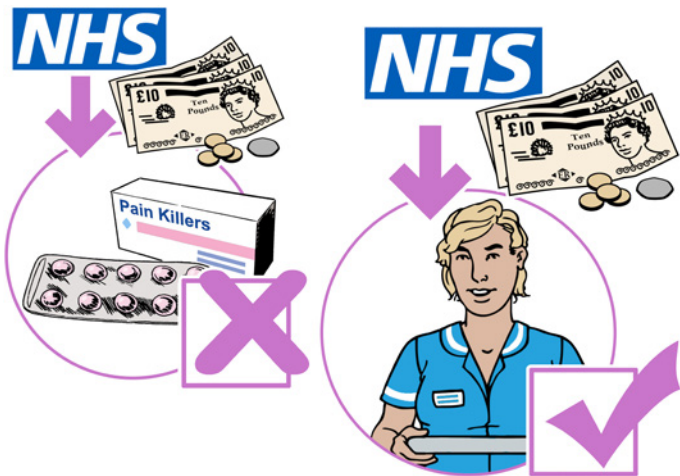
You can buy medicines to treat these illnesses over the counter, from the pharmacy or the supermarket.



When you go to the GP and get these medicines on prescription, it ends up costing the NHS a lot of money.



For these minor illnesses, you can get the same advice from the Pharmacist that you would get from the GP.



By cutting down on these costs, the NHS can use the money it saves on other things, like treatment for cancer or mental health problems.

# What are the benefits of going to the pharmacy instead of seeing your GP?



Pharmacists have the training and the skills to help you treat and manage minor illnesses.



You don't need to book an appointment with a pharmacist; you can just go to a pharmacy and ask for help or advice.



If a pharmacist thinks you need to see a doctor, they will tell you straight away if you need to go to your GP, a walk-in clinic, or to A&E.



# What can you do?



You should keep some common medicines in your cupboard.



You can use them when you need to treat minor illnesses at home, without having to book an appointment with your GP.



Some of these medicines are:

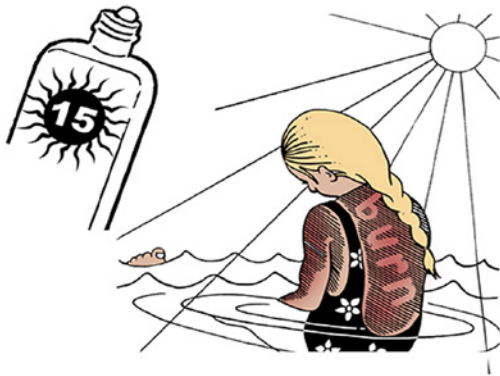
- A painkiller to treat things like mild pain, discomfort and fever;



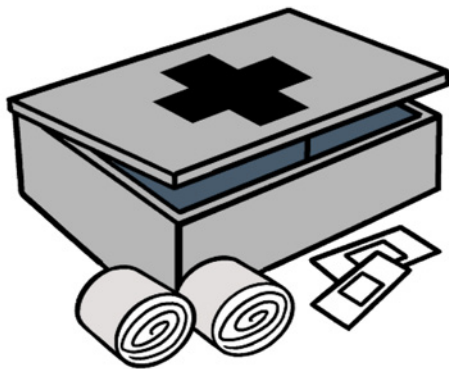
- Medicines to treat indigestion and constipation;



- Medicines to treat colds and hay fever;



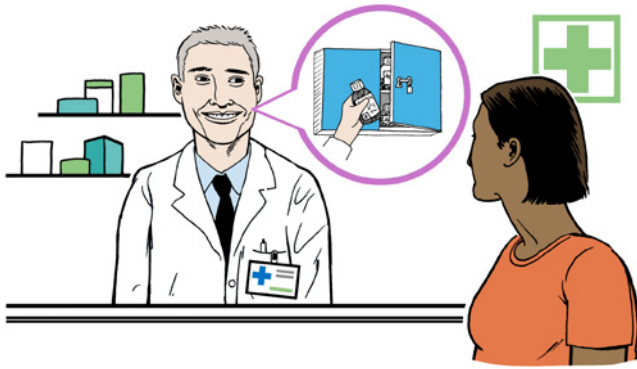
- Lotions to protect from the sun and to use after you've been in the sun;



- Some basic first aid products, like plasters, bandages, and antiseptic.



If you have children, you also need to make sure you have medicines and products that are suited to children.

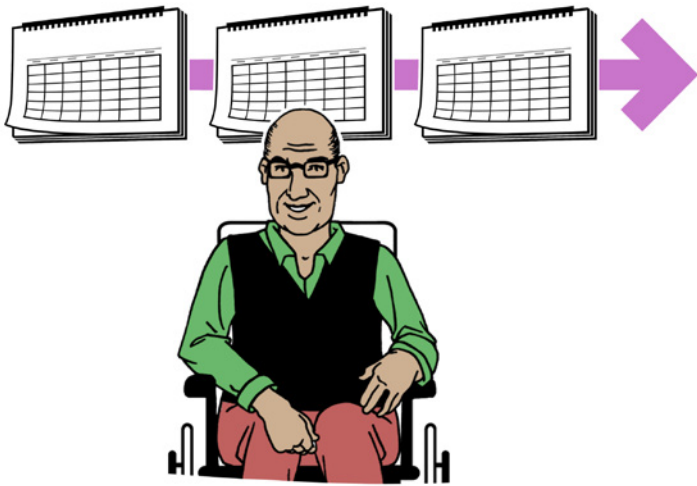


Pharmacists can also explain where you should safely keep these items in your house, and how to use them.

What about patients who need to take medicines for these conditions regularly?  
Or people in special situations?



Some people will still receive these medicines on prescription. If this is your case, then your GP, nurse, or clinical pharmacist will speak to you about this.

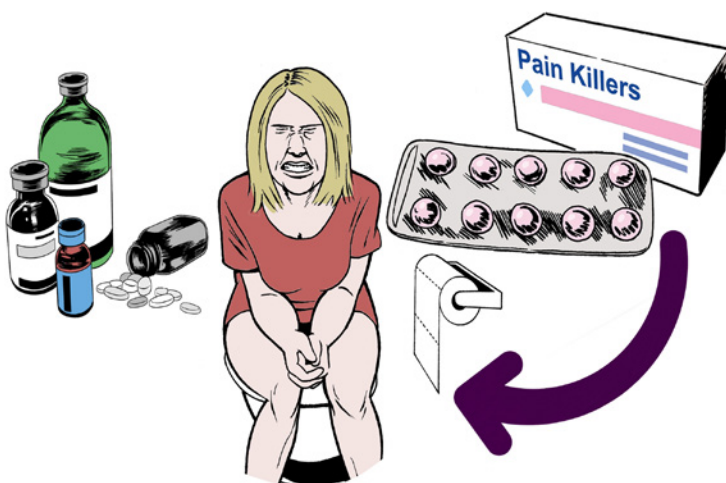


The main reasons someone would still get these medicines on prescription are:

- They need this medicine to treat a long term condition, for example painkillers to manage pain from chronic arthritis.



- They need this medicine to treat complex cases of minor illnesses, for example medicines to treat migraines that don't go away with over the counter medicines.



- They need this medicine to manage the side effects of prescription medicines they are taking or the symptom of another illness, for example to manage constipation caused by taking some painkillers.





- The patient belongs to a group that should not normally take that medicine, for example if a medicine is not recommended to pregnant women, but the GP advises they should take it.

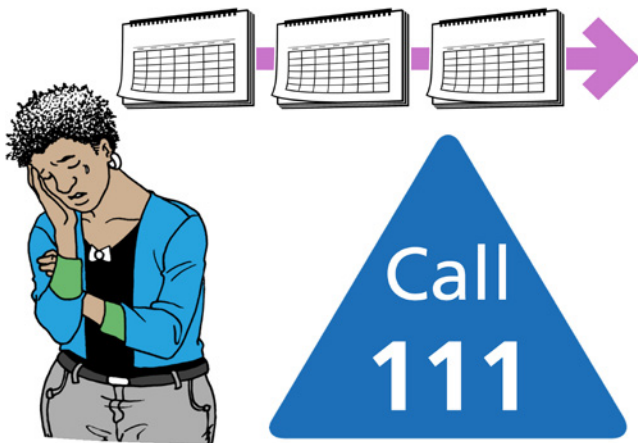


- The GP considers they cannot treat the illness themselves because of things like mental health problems, or if they are very vulnerable.

# What if my symptoms do not improve?



Your pharmacist can tell you for how long your symptoms should last.



If you do not get better after this time or if you start to feel a lot worse, contact your GP or call 111.



Call 999 or go to A&E only for serious or life threatening emergencies.

# Where can I find more information?



Ask a pharmacist about advice and treatment for the illnesses we are referring to in this document.



The NHS Website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) also has a lot of information about choosing the right service for you and on how to treat minor illnesses.



You can find out more information about these changes here:  
[nhs.uk/OTCmedicines](http://nhs.uk/OTCmedicines)



Ask someone for help if you cannot understand or read the information on any of these websites.



If you have any questions visit your pharmacy for advice and treatments for the conditions listed.



Design and illustration ©CHANGE  
[www.changepeople.org](http://www.changepeople.org)