

# Welcome To Devon



## Accessing healthcare services

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If you need this translated into a different language, please just ask. (See the back cover for our email address.)



If you need help with reading this booklet or writing any medical forms then please let us know. (See the back cover for our email address.)

## How to access the NHS

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### Registering with a GP practice

First you will be allocated a GP practice on arrival and supported to register at this practice. You will be entitled to the same health benefits as every other person living here, whether they are new health concerns or helping to manage long-term conditions, and you will not be expected to pay for any of the advice that you receive.



### Booking an appointment

If you feel you need an appointment with your GP practice you should phone them directly.

Whilst you are settling into Devon, you can speak to the team at the hotel and they will help you make contact with your GP practice.



### Getting medication

You can buy some medications in a pharmacy or at the pharmacy counter in a supermarket. For some medications you will need a prescription from your doctor.

Prescriptions remain free of charge for all children up to the age of 16, or 18 if in full-time education. They are also free for contraception and for people with some long-term conditions and those on benefits. If you are not certain if you need to pay, then speak to a pharmacist who can help.



### Translators

Even though it may seem easier to bring a family member or friend to help translate at your appointment, we would instead recommend that you tell the person you are booking with that you need a translator, along with what language you require. They can either book a trained medical translator or use the language line service which is through a phone.

This is to ensure that safe and accurate translations take place to ensure the safety of both you as a patient as well as the clinician giving medical advice.



### Chaperones

GP practices have a range of both male and female clinicians.

When booking an appointment, it is possible to request a particular gender if you feel more comfortable, however it is important to note that this is not always possible.

If you are having an examination and would like someone in the room, you can ask to either bring someone with you or get a chaperone.



### Medical care

All medical care is free for those who are a resident of the UK. This includes all appointments, physical assessments, any needed tests or scans and any operations.

For those who want to see specialists privately, this can be either self-funded or provided through insurance.



### Dental care

Dental care is slightly different as it is all private treatment unless you are eligible for NHS treatment for which there is still some part payment required.

Any treatment that your dentist believes is clinically necessary to achieve and maintain good oral health should be available on the NHS. There are 4 bands of charges for all NHS dental treatments.

If you need treatment from more than one band as part of your treatment plan, you will only be charged the cost of the highest band treatment in your plan. You will not be charged for each individual treatment.



### NHS medical exemption certificate

These are supplied for those who are eligible for free prescriptions due to medical grounds.

- Entitles you to free NHS prescriptions only
- Doesn't cover dental treatment or help with other health costs
- Should be shown when you collect a prescription
- Is valid for five years (or until your 60th birthday, whichever is sooner)

If you think you are eligible, you can apply for a medical exemption certificate through your GP.



### Medication

A lot of medication is available to buy over the counter without a prescription from pharmacies and health stores (for example, Boots and Superdrug) as well as supermarkets.

For items that need a prescription, these are collected from a pharmacy only.

Some people who are eligible will get free prescriptions. For those who have to pay, the current prescription charge is £9.35 for each item. This is a set fee regardless of what medication you are receiving.

You can pay for a pre-payment card which is a set monthly fee regardless of how many items you require. These cards are available online through the NHS website.



### Who is eligible for free NHS prescriptions?

Some groups are automatically entitled to free NHS prescriptions. You are eligible if you:

- Are pregnant or have recently had a baby
- Are under 16 years old
- Are aged 16 to 18 years old and in full-time education
- Are over 60 years old

Or if you are on any of these benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit dependant on last assessment
- Tax credits with an income of less than £15,276

If you are not sure of your eligibility, or want more information then visit: [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-help-health-costs](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-help-health-costs)

If you try to claim free prescriptions without being eligible then it can be classed as fraud and you could face a fine.



## Self help

There is a lot of useful advice which is easily accessible through your phone or computer from the NHS website, for both new problems and long-term conditions. It will help to guide you if you do not know where you need to go for further help for each condition as well as provide advice about how to treat or manage certain conditions at home. **Visit: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**



## Pharmacy

At all local pharmacies you are able to get advice as well and you can buy medications and supplies to manage many conditions at home, such as:

- Allergies
- Burns (minor)
- Coughs
- Colds
- Constipation
- Dry skin
- Earwax
- Haemorrhoids
- Hayfever
- Heartburn
- Pain relief
- Sore throat
- Sunburn

They will usually ask some questions to make sure you are getting correct and safe treatment, and will also advise you if you need to go to your GP practice or other services instead.



## NHS 111

NHS 111 can help if you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do. They are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You answer questions about your symptoms on the website [111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk), or by speaking to a fully trained adviser on the phone, by dialling 111. They will either give you self-care advice, direct you to somewhere for treatment or book an appointment with a clinician.

If your symptoms get worse, please get help from: **111.nhs.uk/** (in English). For help in other languages, call **111** and ask for an interpreter.



## GP Practice

You can get help from a GP for free, but you'll usually need to make an appointment which are for routine and non-urgent conditions that can usually wait a few days. If you feel your problem is urgent but not life threatening, then call 111 for advice on how best to manage your concern.

Practices offer a range of services on a face-to-face basis including phlebotomy (blood tests), immunisations and vaccinations, cervical screening and health checks.

GPs play an important role in cardiovascular, metabolic and respiratory diseases and mental health problems. They run clinics for patients with chronic conditions such as asthma, hypertension and diabetes.



## Urgent Care Centre

Urgent Care Centres are there to manage problems that still require urgent medical treatment, but are not life threatening that would require a hospital visit.

These units are usually run by very experienced advanced nurses and paramedics who are able to help with some of the following concerns:

- Suspected broken limbs
- Minor head injuries
- Cuts and grazes
- Bites and stings
- Minor scalds and burns
- Being sick (vomiting) and diarrhoea
- Emergency contraception
- Skin infections and rashes
- Sprains and strains
- Eye problems
- Coughs and colds
- High fever
- Stomach pain



## Accident and Emergency (A&E)

A&E is there for helping those who are suffering from genuine life-threatening emergencies, either from injury or illness.

- Loss of consciousness
- Acute confused state and fits that are not stopping
- Chest pain
- Breathing difficulties
- Severe bleeding that cannot be stopped
- Severe allergic reactions
- Severe burns or scalds
- Stroke
- Major trauma such as a road traffic accident

First, you will be assessed when you get to the hospital, whether you've walked in or arrived by ambulance.

What happens next depends on the results of your assessment. Sometimes further tests need to be arranged before a course of action can be decided.

If the nurse or doctor feels your situation is not a serious accident or emergency, you may be sent to a nearby Urgent Care Centre, Minor Injuries Unit or referred to a GP on site.



## Call 999

If you have had an accident or need emergency help, and either you are unable to or it is not safe to get yourself to A&E, then call 999 and ask for an ambulance.

Please note that just because you call an ambulance, it does not mean you will get seen any quicker in A&E unless it is a true emergency.

Some conditions that require on ambulance are:

- Persistent, severe chest pain
- Breathing difficulties
- Severe bleeding that can't be stopped
- If you think you or someone you are with is having a stroke
- Lost consciousness
- Fits that are not stopping
- When someone is in an acute confused state



## Pregnancy care

Looking after women when they are pregnant remains a priority within the UK for the wellbeing of both mother and baby. When you find out that you are pregnant, you can self refer to the local midwifery team who will continue to care for you until 4 weeks after you have delivered your baby. They are there to help with any concerns, perform regular blood and urine tests to assess for any problems, arrange ultrasound scans to monitor the pregnancy and discuss a birthing plan with you.



## Stopping smoking

Smoking, either tobacco or Pann, can contribute to lung disease, heart attacks and strokes. In the UK smoking is now illegal in all indoor spaces, if you are sitting outside a restaurant or café, and if you are driving in a car with any children present.

There are a lot of excellent services locally to support you in stopping and preventing any further damage. If you wish to discuss getting help then please call your GP practice or visit the local smoking cessation service. You can find your nearest one here: [www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/find-your-local-stop-smoking-service/](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/find-your-local-stop-smoking-service/)



## Mental Health

Looking after your mental health is just as important as your physical wellbeing. There are specialist services for adults and children dedicated to those who have become refugees, as well as general mental health conditions such as anxiety or depression.

We are fortunate to have our own specialist Mental Health Team who care for all our patients and you can book directly with them. For more specialist care there is the Community Mental Health Team, with separate adult and children's services. If you are worried about your mental health and would like to discuss your options, then call and book an appointment with a GP. **If you are having a mental health crisis and need immediate help, call the 24/7 Urgent Mental Health helpline on 0808 196 8708.**



## Opticians

It is recommended that most people should get their eyes tested every two years.

Your eyes rarely hurt when something is wrong with them, so having regular eye tests is important to help detect potentially harmful conditions.

If you're eligible for a free NHS sight or eye test, the NHS pays for it and you will not be charged. Otherwise they cost roughly £25.

Your ophthalmic practitioner or optometrist may recommend you have an NHS sight test more often than every two years if you:

- Are a child wearing glasses
- Have diabetes
- Are aged 40 or over and have a family history of glaucoma
- Are aged 60 or over



## Hearing services

You can get a free hearing assessment at places like Boots and Specsavers on the high street. If it is abnormal, then your GP can refer you to an NHS hearing aid provider if they think you might need a hearing aid.

The benefits of getting a hearing aid on the NHS include:

- Hearing aids are provided for free as a long-term loan
- Batteries and repairs are free (there may be a charge if you lose or break your hearing aid and it needs to be replaced)
- You do not have to pay for any follow-up appointments or aftercare. The hearing aids available on the NHS are more basic than others available, but others are available if you are happy to self fund them.



## Dental Care

Just like medical care, some dental care is also available within the NHS for those who are eligible. For those that are not eligible then treatment is self funded.

It is important to start visiting the dentist when a child starts to get their first teeth, and then continue with regular check ups to avoid any damage to the teeth. If you do get any new dental pain then they will also be able to check your teeth and treat any problems they find. This includes x-rays, fillings, removals and surgery.

There are lots of local dentists, many will treat both NHS and private patients so it is important to check before agreeing to any treatment.

Once you have registered with a dentist then you can contact them for any routine or emergency appointment.

If you have not yet registered with a dentist then you can call Access Dental – NHS Devon Dental Helpline on 01392 822 348. If you have an emergency or to register please call 03330 063 300.



We are fortunate in the UK to have a very well-researched and long-standing vaccination schedule for children and adults – all for free.

It is important to vaccinate to protect both yourself and those around you who may have a weaker immune system.

It is safe if you do not know what vaccines you have had before to just start the schedule again.

It has been shown that measles and polio is still widespread in Afghanistan, whereas in the UK it is rarely seen thanks to the vaccines.

If you would like to come for your vaccinations, or just want to ask some questions about any of the vaccines before making an appointment, then please call the practice.



## Vaccine abbreviations

<b>DTP/ DTaP</b>	Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis
<b>Hep B</b>	Hepatitis B
<b>Hib</b>	Haemophilus Influenzae B
<b>HPV</b>	Human Papillomavirus
<b>IPV</b>	Polio
<b>PCV / PPV</b>	Pneumococcal
<b>MenACWY</b>	Meningitis A, C, W & Y
<b>MenB</b>	Meningitis B
<b>Men C</b>	Meningitis C
<b>MMR</b>	Measles, Mumps and Rubella



## United Kingdom

<b>Birth</b>	BCG ( <i>if high risk</i> )
<b>8 weeks</b>	DTaP/IPV/Hib/Hep B, PCV, Men B, Rotavirus
<b>12 weeks</b>	DTaP/IPV/Hib/Hep B, PCV, Rotavirus
<b>16 weeks</b>	DTaP/IPV/Hib/Hep B, Rotavirus
<b>1 year</b>	Hib Men C, PCV, MMR, Men B
<b>3 Yrs 4 Mths</b>	MMR, DTaP / IPV
<b>12 Years</b>	HPVx 2
<b>14 Years</b>	DTP, MenACWY
<b>Pregnancy</b>	Influenza, dTap/IPV
<b>65 Years</b>	PPV, Influenza ( <i>younger if at risk</i> )
<b>70 Years</b>	Shingles



## Afghanistan

<b>Birth BCG</b>	Oral Polio
<b>6 Weeks</b>	DTP/HepB/Hib, Oral Polio
<b>10 Weeks</b>	DTP/HepB/Hib, Oral Polio
<b>14 Weeks</b>	DTP/HepB/Hib, Oral Polio
<b>9 Months</b>	Measles, Oral Polio
<b>18 Months</b>	Measles



We are fortunate within the NHS to have access to several health-screening services which enable patients to be screened for potential conditions before they become a problem. Everyone will be offered the appropriate screening and your decision to attend this appointment is encouraged. All screening is free of charge, and if any problems are found then there is an automatic referral to the specialists so that they can manage them for you.



## Screening in pregnancy

The screening tests offered during pregnancy in England are either ultrasound scans or blood tests, or a combination of both. Ultrasound scans may detect conditions such as spina bifida. Blood tests can show whether you have a higher chance of inherited conditions such as sickle cell disease and thalassaemia, and whether you have infections like HIV, hepatitis B or syphilis. There are extra tests for conditions such as Down's syndrome.



## Newborn screening

Every baby is offered a thorough physical examination soon after birth to check their eyes, heart, hips and, in boys, testicles. This is to identify babies who may have conditions that need further testing or treatment. The examination is carried out within 72 hours of birth and then again at 6 to 8 weeks of age, as some conditions can take a while to develop.



## Cervical screening

Cervical screening (a smear test) checks the health of your cervix. The cervix is the opening to your womb from your vagina. The sample is checked for certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV) that can cause changes to the cells of your cervix. These are called "high risk" types of HPV. All women between the age of 25 and 50 will be invited every 3 years, and then between 50 and 65 every 5 years.



## Aortic aneurysm screening

Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening is a way of checking if there's a bulge or swelling in the aorta, the main blood vessel that runs from your heart down through your tummy.

Men aged 65 or over are most at risk of getting AAAs. Screening can help spot a swelling in the aorta early on when it can usually be treated. It involves a quick and painless ultrasound of your tummy.



## Breast cancer screening

About 1 in 8 women in the UK are diagnosed with breast cancer. If it's detected early, treatment is more successful and there's a good chance of recovery.

It uses an X-ray test called a mammogram that can spot cancers when they're too small to see or feel.

All women aged from 50 to their 71st birthday who are registered with a GP are automatically invited for breast cancer screening every 3 years.



## Bowel cancer screening

Bowel cancer is the 4th most common type of cancer. Screening can help find it at an early stage, when it's easier to treat.

Bowel cancer screening is available to everyone aged 56 or over.

You use a home test kit, called a faecal immunochemical test (FIT), to collect a small sample of poo and send it to a laboratory. This is checked for tiny amounts of blood.





## What is Coronavirus?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is the illness caused by a virus first identified in Wuhan city, China. Most people recover quickly but some people may have symptoms for a few weeks or longer.

Coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, pregnant women, and those with long-term health conditions.



## How is Coronavirus spread?

Coronavirus is spread by respiratory droplets (related to your airways), and can be passed on by coughs and sneezes, or by touching contaminated surfaces and objects.

People can spread Coronavirus without knowing, if they are infected but have not yet developed symptoms, or they are asymptomatic (no symptoms at all).



## What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?

The most common symptoms are:

- A new, continuous cough
- A fever or high temperature (37.8°C or greater)
- A loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia)

Some people may feel generally unwell.

Some people will have more serious symptoms, including pneumonia or difficulty breathing, which might require admission to hospital.



## How to avoid catching and spreading Coronavirus

- Regularly wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds; use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if your hands aren't visibly dirty
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with disposable tissues, or the crook of your elbow; dispose of used tissues in the nearest waste bin and wash your hands immediately after
- If you can, open the windows to let fresh air in
- Wear a face covering if in crowded spaces
- Keep frequently touched surfaces and items clean; ask Hotel Reception if you need help with this.
- Try to avoid sharing items such as cutlery with other families, where possible.



## Getting tested if you have no symptoms

If you have no symptoms, free tests (called Lateral Flow Tests) are available to check whether you are infected (and at risk of passing the virus on to others). It is recommended that you test with Lateral Flow Tests twice per week.

You can get a Lateral Flow Test from a testing centre where staff can help you with the test if needed. You can also order them online. Further details are here: [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)

If your Lateral Flow Test is positive, please return to your room and stay inside the room (self-isolate), and arrange a further test (called a PCR test). You can arrange a free PCR test to check if you have Coronavirus here: [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)

Please tell the hotel so they can support you.



### Vaccination

The Coronavirus vaccine is being offered for free to all persons in the UK over age of 12 years.

It does not cause a Coronavirus infection. It helps to build up your immunity to the virus, so your body will fight it off more easily if it affects you. This can reduce your risk of developing Coronavirus and make your symptoms milder if you do get it.

After you've had your vaccine, there is a chance you might still get or spread Coronavirus, so you must still follow the guidance on what to do if you get symptoms.



### If you have symptoms of Coronavirus

If you or someone you live with develops symptoms of Coronavirus (however mild), you should remain in your room (self-isolate). Please arrange to have a PCR test via this website: [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)

If your PCR test is positive, you will need to stay in your room (self-isolate) for 10 days from date of your test (if no symptoms) or the start of your symptoms. This will help to control the spread of the virus.

Please tell the hotel so they can support you.



### Medical help

If your symptoms get worse, please get help from: [111.nhs.uk/](http://111.nhs.uk/) (in English). For help in other languages, call 111 and ask for an interpreter.

Call 999 if you feel very unwell or think there's something seriously wrong.



### If you are told you are a contact of someone with Coronavirus

If someone you live with has symptoms of Coronavirus, or has tested positive for Coronavirus, please get a PCR test straight away.

You can arrange it here: [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)

Please self-isolate in your room for 10 full days after you last had contact with a person who has tested positive.

Please tell the hotel so they can support you.

You will not need to self-isolate if any of the following apply:

- You're fully vaccinated – this means 14 days have passed since your final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine given by the NHS
- You're under 18½ years old
- You're taking part or have taken part in a COVID-19 vaccine trial
- You're not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

If you have any symptoms of Coronavirus, please follow instructions above. Please tell the hotel so they can support you.

For the latest information, please see here:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)



### Key information

**When to self-isolate and what to do:**

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/)

**How long to self isolate:**

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/)

**How to do a PCR test for Coronavirus:**

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/how-to-do-a-test-at-home-or-at-a-test-site/how-to-do-a-pcr-test/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/how-to-do-a-test-at-home-or-at-a-test-site/how-to-do-a-pcr-test/)

**Getting Lateral Flow Tests:** [www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/rapid-testing-devon/](http://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/rapid-testing-devon/)

**Space to make your own notes**

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**If you want to get in touch about  
this booklet email: [d-ccg.communications@nhs.net](mailto:d-ccg.communications@nhs.net)**