

Stay well this Winter, and the seven steps to self-care

- 1. Know where to get advice** - make your local community pharmacy your first point of contact when you're starting to feel unwell.
- 2. Be prepared and stock up on over-the-counter medicines** - including allergy medicines; simple pain killers; medication for sore throats, coughs and colds; heartburn and indigestion remedies; and anti-diarrhoea medication.
- 3. If you want further advice, speak to your local community pharmacist** - they can give advice on minor conditions and recommend over-the-counter medications to relieve your symptoms.
- 4. Always look for the lowest cost version on the medication** - medicines sold by their ingredient name, like paracetamol, will be less costly but just as effective as a branded product.
- 5. Know how long it can take for minor conditions to clean up** - sore throat = 7 days, common cold = 10 days, sinusitis = 18 days, cough or bronchitis = 21 days.
- 6. Contact your GP surgery if your symptoms aren't clearing up or are getting worse** - don't forget to tell them everything you have already tried for your symptoms and for how long.
- 7. Some pharmacies provide a minor ailments service** - these pharmacies can supply medicines for certain conditions on the NHS. This is the Think pharmacy Minor Ailments service and you can ask to speak privately in a consulting room if you'd rather not be overheard. To find out more, visit www.easterncheshireccg.nhs.uk and search for "Think Pharmacy". When you're feeling under the weather, it doesn't mean your GP is the first person you should try and see. Following the steps above, getting advice from community pharmacist or Online from NHS Choice at www.nhs.uk could mean you're prepared to tackle minor ailments as we head into the winter.