



NHS services for students

Helping you get the right care
when you need it.

STOP

Stay calm, assess
the situation

THINK

What advice or treatment
do you need?

CHOOSE

Choose where to get the
right help quickly

Top tips for students

It's important to look after your health when moving away from home for the first time. This includes registering with a new GP practice and finding out where to go when you are ill.

Here are our five health tips for new students:

1. Register with a GP practice

If, like most students, you spend more weeks of the year at your university address than your family's address, you need to register with a GP practice near to you as soon as possible.

That way, you can access health services quickly and easily while you're at university.

This is especially important if you have an ongoing health condition, particularly one that needs medication, such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy.

Sign up to the free NHS App for a simple and secure way to access health services including ordering repeat prescriptions, checking test results and viewing your GP medical records. Download it on your smartphone via the App Store or Google Play.

Find your nearest GP practice:
www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp

Registering with a GP practice gives you access to a range of health professionals so you can be seen by the right person as quickly as possible. The roles will differ in each practice. To understand who you might meet, visit: www.StopThinkChoose.co.uk

Getting ill during the holidays

If you become unwell or need other medical treatment when you're at home or not staying near your university GP, you can contact your nearest practice to ask for treatment.

You can receive emergency treatment for 14 days. After that, you will have to register as a temporary resident or permanent patient.

Find out how to register as a temporary resident with a GP: www.nhs.uk

You can also visit an urgent care service anywhere in the country. These can provide treatment for minor injuries or illnesses such as cuts, bruises and rashes.

However, they are not designed for treating long-term conditions or immediately life-threatening problems. You don't need to be registered and you don't need an appointment.

Other health services available

You don't need to contact your GP practice for all medical conditions. Many common issues, such as colds, sore throats, hay fever or conjunctivitis, can be dealt with by a pharmacist.

Your GP practice or pharmacist will not generally give you a prescription for medicines that can be bought 'over the counter' for a range of minor health concerns. Instead, over-the-counter medicines are available to buy in a pharmacy or supermarket. The team of health professionals at your local pharmacy can offer help and clinical advice to manage minor health concerns and if your symptoms suggest it's more serious, they'll make sure you get the care you need.

Find out more at:

www.StopThinkChoose.co.uk

Help with prescription costs

You may be eligible for free prescriptions. See if you are eligible for the NHS Low Income Scheme or think about a prepayment card: www.nhs.uk

Urgent treatment

Visit an urgent treatment centre if you have a suspected broken bone or fracture, a sprain or a strain, minor cut, burn or scald.

You don't need an appointment and they are open a minimum of 12-hours-a-day from 8am to 8pm, 365-days-a-year, including bank holidays.

Find your nearest centre at:

www.StopThinkChoose.co.uk

Not sure where to go?

You can check our local guide at: www.StopThinkChoose.co.uk

or use NHS 111, by phone or online: 111.nhs.uk



2. Register with a dentist

Dental problems can't be dealt with by doctors, so make sure you register with a local dentist. Not all treatment is free, even under the NHS. You may be able to apply for help with health costs, including prescriptions and dental care.



Find an NHS dentist:
www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist

3. Check your vaccinations

Men ACWY vaccination

Young people are now routinely offered a vaccination to prevent meningitis W disease. The Men ACWY vaccine protects against four different causes of meningitis and septicaemia: Meningococcal (Men) A, C, W and Y diseases. It replaces the separate Men C vaccine.

In England, the Men ACWY vaccine is routinely offered to teenagers in school years 9 and 10. If you missed having it at school or did not have it before coming to the UK to study, you can ask your GP for this vaccine until your 25th birthday.

It is particularly important to have the vaccination if you're a student going away to university or college for the first time, ideally before the start of the academic year. This is because you'll be at particularly high risk in the first weeks of term when you're likely to come into contact with many new people of a similar age.

Human papillomavirus (HPV)

If you missed getting vaccinated when you were in secondary school, the HPV vaccine is available for free on the NHS for all girls under 25 and boys born after 1 September 2006.

The vaccine protects against the human papillomavirus (HPV) which causes most cervical cancers and cancers that affect both boys and girls, including some anal, genital, mouth and throat (head and neck) cancers. It also offers protection against the most common genital warts caused by HPV.

Any student who missed their HPV vaccine can catch up before their 25th birthday by contacting their GP practice.

Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination

Universities and colleges also advise students to be immunised against mumps, measles and rubella before starting their studies. The MMR vaccine is part of the routine NHS childhood immunisation schedule. This means most young people who've grown up in England will have had two doses of it in childhood. These highly infectious conditions can easily spread between unvaccinated people.

Getting vaccinated is important, as these conditions can also lead to serious problems, including meningitis and hearing loss. If you're not sure you've had two doses of the MMR vaccination, contact your GP practice.

Flu vaccination

Have an annual flu vaccination if you have a long-term health condition, such as asthma (needing steroid inhaler or tablets), diabetes, kidney disease or heart disease. Find more information and check your eligibility at www.GetVaccinatedNow.co.uk

You can treat flu-like symptoms with medication, which can be bought from a supermarket or pharmacy, without the need to contact your GP practice or have a prescription.

Covid-19 vaccination

You may be eligible for a Covid vaccine if you're at increased risk of getting seriously ill from Covid-19. Check your eligibility at www.GetVaccinatedNow.co.uk

4. Get contraception

Even if you don't plan to be sexually active while you're a student, it's good to be prepared.

You can get contraception from most GP practices and sexual health services. This includes routine oral contraception and emergency contraception.

In addition, your local pharmacy is a convenient place for people to receive confidential advice and support for contraception, with many pharmacies opening into the evenings and weekends and offering walk-in services.

In Kent and Medway, a number of participating pharmacies can offer patients a supply of oral contraception without needing to attend their GP practice or sexual health clinic to obtain a prescription. This applies to patients already prescribed these medicines and looking for a further supply, and those considering starting this medicine.

To find a participating pharmacy, please visit: www.stopthinkchoose.co.uk/pharmacy

All pharmacies offer emergency oral contraception, with many pharmacies providing this free for patients meeting certain criteria.

Emergency oral contraception can be given up to 120 hours following unprotected sex or a coil can be fitted up to 120 hours following unprotected intercourse. This could be accessible from your GP practice or specialist sexual health service.

Visit the sexual health website for your local area for more details.

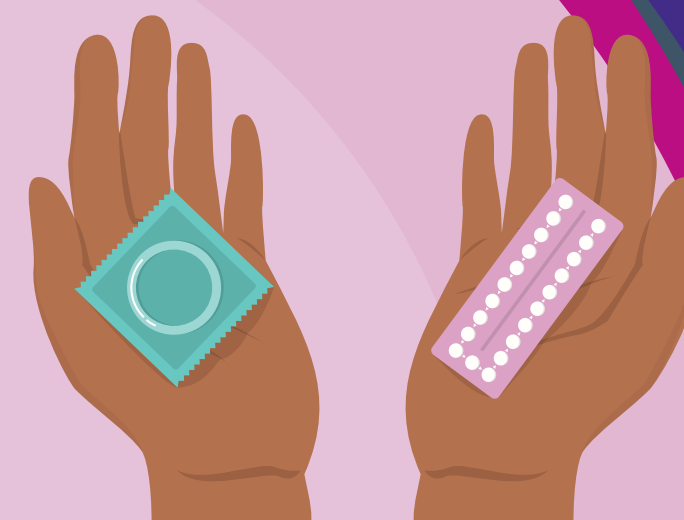
Find out more, including your local service:
www.kent.gov.uk/sexualhealth
and www.medway.gov.uk/sexualhealth

Safe sex

Condoms help protect you against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and are free to those under 25.

Many STIs, such as HIV, have no symptoms. The more partners you have, the higher the risk of getting an STI.

If you're worried you have put yourself at risk of or may have an STI you can get tested for HIV and STIs. Order a free STI kit online or contact your sexual health service.



5. Rest and eat healthy food

Prevention is better than cure, as the saying goes, so you'll greatly increase your chances of avoiding your GP's waiting room by taking care of yourself in the first place.

Student life may not be renowned for early nights and healthy eating, but getting enough sleep and eating well will mean you have a better chance of staying healthy. You'll feel more energetic and be better equipped to cope with studying and exams.

Remember

Remember to:

- eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day
- buy wholemeal bread and pasta instead of white
- keep fast food to a minimum.

Eating well doesn't have to cost a lot and is often cheaper than takeaways. Taking the time to cook simple meals instead of eating out or buying ready meals is also healthier.

Find quick, cheap and easy meals at www.kentcht.nhs.uk/get-food-smart and www.kent.gov.uk/healthyweight



Things you should have at home:

Painkillers



Ask your pharmacist for advice. Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be bought from a supermarket or pharmacist. Your GP practice will not generally give you a prescription for painkillers as they can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy.

Contraception



Essential to avoid surprises.

Antihistamines



These are medicines often used to relieve symptoms of allergies, such as hay fever. Speak to your pharmacist about what is suitable. Your GP practice will not generally give you a prescription for antihistamines as they can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy.

Stop Think Choose

Use our handy guide at www.StopThinkChoose.co.uk

It has details on local services, including a map of pharmacies and their opening times.

Plasters



Most cuts and grazes are minor and can be easily treated at home. When the wound has stopped bleeding, wash it under tap water. Avoid using antiseptic as it may damage the skin and slow healing. Pat it dry and apply a plaster. Minor wounds should start to heal within a few days.

Oral rehydration sachets



For diarrhoea. These replace the salt and water lost from your body.

Thermometer for fevers



It is good to be able to check your temperature if you feel unwell. A high temperature (fever) above 37.5 degrees can suggest there might be an underlying issue. Keeping yourself cool and taking paracetamol or ibuprofen is usually all that's needed to help reduce a fever.

What to do when you need emergency help

If someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk, call 999.

Medical emergencies can include: Loss of consciousness, persistent and severe chest pain, fits that are not stopping, serious head injuries, severe burns, breathing difficulties, severe bleeding, heart attack or stroke.

Good mental health

It's normal to feel down, anxious or stressed from time to time, but if these feelings affect your daily activities (including your studies), or don't go away after a couple of weeks, get help.

It's important to understand, whatever the cause, you're not alone and there is help and support available to you.



Further help and support can be found:

Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub

Find information and advice about mental health and wellbeing services available in Kent and Medway:

www.kmhealthandcare.uk/mental-wellbeing-information-hub and www.medway.gov.uk/mentalwellbeing

Release the Pressure

A highly trained and experienced team available 24/7 to provide expert support, no matter what you are going through. Contact 0800 107 0160.

NHS Talking Therapies

Talking therapies can help with anxiety, depression, stress, trauma, phobias and more. www.kmtalkingtherapies.co.uk

Live Well Kent and Medway

Find support with keeping active and healthy and everyday living, including: managing your money, debt and benefits, housing support and guidance, and accessing counselling. Visit: livewellkent.org.uk to find out more.

Safe Havens

Face-to-face support, open to anyone 18+ living in Kent and Medway. No appointment or referral needed. Available 365 days-a-year. For locations and opening times, visit: www.kmhealthandcare.uk/safe-havens

Frank

Friendly, confidential drugs advice. Phone: 0300 123 6600 or visit: www.talktofrank.com

Improve your lifestyle

For apps, online info and local support services to help manage your weight, get active and improve your lifestyle, go to: www.oneyoukent.org.uk or abettermedway.co.uk

Quit smoking

You are more likely to quit for good with support, visit www.kent.gov.uk/smokefree or www.medway.gov.uk/stopsmoking

Drug and alcohol support

Reducing the amount of alcohol you drink can improve your health and wellbeing. Visit www.kent.gov.uk/knowyourscore and take the online quiz to find out how alcohol might be affecting your health. Visit www.medway.gov.uk/alcohol for support if you live in Medway.

If you, or someone you know, has a drug or alcohol problem, visit www.kent.gov.uk/drugsandalcohol or abettermedway.co.uk