



What to keep in your medicines cabinet

Even a minor illness like a cold, headache or diarrhoea can disrupt your life. You can be prepared for most common illnesses by keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home.

This list below doesn't cover everything, but it will help you deal with most minor illnesses. Always follow the directions on medicine packets and information leaflets, and never take more than the stated dose. If you have questions about any of these medicines or you want to buy them, ask your local pharmacist.

Always keep medicines out of the sight and reach of children. A high, lockable cupboard in a cool, dry place is ideal.

Regularly check the expiry date on a medicine. If a medicine is past its use-by date, don't use it or throw it away. Take it to your pharmacy, where it can be disposed of safely.

Symptom	Medicine
Minor aches, pains (e.g. headaches and menstrual pain) and flu symptoms	Paracetamol
	Ibuprofen
	Aspirin (NB: aspirin must not be given to anyone under 16 years of age)
Allergies (e.g. hayfever) and insect bites	Antihistamines (topical and oral)
Diarrhoea	Oral rehydration sachets
	Anti-diarrhoea tablets (e.g. loperamide)
Indigestion, stomach ache, heartburn, trapped wind	Antacid tablets or liquid (e.g. Gaviscon)

As well as the medicines listed above, keep a well prepared first aid kit. This can help treat minor cuts, sprains and bruises, and reduce the risk of cuts becoming infected. It should contain the following items:

Bandages	These can support injured limbs, such as a sprained wrist, and also apply direct pressure to larger cuts before being treated in hospital
Plasters	Keep a range of sizes, waterproof if possible.
Thermometer	Digital thermometers that can be put in your mouth produce accurate readings; a thermometer placed under the arm is a good way of reading a baby or young child's temperature.
Antiseptic	This can be used to clean cuts before they're dressed
Eyewash solution	This can help to wash out grit or dirt in the eyes
Sterile dressing	Larger injuries should be covered with a sterile dressing to prevent infection until treatment can be given by a healthcare professional.
Medical tape	This is used to secure dressings and can also be used to tape an injured finger to an uninjured one, creating a makeshift splint.
Tweezers	For taking out splinters

Don't forget **sunscreen** too – keep a sun lotion of at least factor 15. Even fairly brief exposure to the sun can cause sunburn.

Further information is available from the NHS Choices website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Pharmacy/Pages/Yourmedicinecabinet.aspx>