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Choose well

We are asking Londoners to use their ambulance service wisely and only call 999 in a real emergency. If you become ill or injured and need medical help or advice, choose well by using the right NHS service for your needs.

Choosing well ensures you receive the right care at the right time and that emergency medical care is available to those people who need it the most.



How can I choose well?

Take some time to find out more about the variety of healthcare services that are available to you and what they can offer:

- [Self care](#)
- [NHS 111](#)
- [Pharmacist](#)
- [GP](#)
- [NHS walk-in centre, urgent care centre or minor injuries unit](#)
- [A&E or 999](#)

Self care

A lot of illnesses can be treated in your home by using over the counter medicine and getting plenty of rest.

This is the best choice to treat very minor illnesses and injuries and will ensure that you receive the rest and recovery you need to get well.

NHS 111

NHS 111 is a new service that is being introduced to make it easier for you to access local NHS healthcare services. You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is a quick and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Call 111 if:

- you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency
- you think you need to go to A&E or need another NHS urgent care service
- you don't know who to call or you don't have a GP to call
- you need health information or reassurance about what to do next

For less urgent health needs, contact your GP or local pharmacist in the usual way.

If a health professional has given you a specific phone number to call when you are concerned about your condition, continue to use that number.

Pharmacist

Pharmacies can be found in local areas across London. Your local pharmacist can give you advice on illnesses and the medicines you need to treat them.

NHS Choices

NHS choices

Search for services near you via the NHS Choices website.

[Link to NHS Choices website](#)

Feeling under the weather?



Top doctors urge people not to store up health problems if feeling under the weather and encourage people to seek early assistance from their pharmacist.

[NHS winter campaign](#)

Visit a pharmacist when you are suffering from a common health problem which does not require being seen by a nurse or doctor.

GP

GP surgeries can be found across London. You can make an appointment with a doctor for medical advice, examinations and prescriptions. In an emergency, a GP can also visit your home outside of opening hours – if you need this service, telephone your local surgery and follow the recorded instructions.

Make an appointment with your local GP when you have an illness or injury that will not go away.

NHS walk-in centre, urgent care centre, or minor injuries unit

Walk-in centres, urgent care centres and minor injuries units give healthcare and advice. Most are open from early in the morning until late at night. You do not need an appointment, and you will be seen by an experienced nurse or GP.

Visit one of these centres if you need medical treatment or advice which does not need a visit to A&E or a medical appointment.

A&E or 999

Accident and emergency departments are found at most hospitals. They help people who show signs of being very ill or are badly injured.

[If it is an emergency](#) and you need to call 999, tell the operator that you want to speak to the ambulance service. You will be transferred to one of our call takers who will ask questions so that we can decide what help to send you.

In an emergency, ambulance staff will be sent to help you. If you have a more minor problem and you do not need immediate help, one of our specially-trained clinical advisors may give you medical advice over the phone. Alternatively, we may pass your details on to NHS 111, so that one of their advisors can ring you back with advice.

You should only call 999 in an emergency. If it is not a life-threatening situation, consider the other options available to you.