

English.



How to access NHS services in Worcestershire.



**Herefordshire and
Worcestershire**
Clinical Commissioning Group



SW Healthcare
Stay Well in South Worcestershire



Welcome.

Welcome to Worcestershire – and to our local NHS.

The National Health Service was created in 1948, with the goal of providing healthcare in the UK that was free to those who need it.

We've created this guide to help you access the right health services for you. There's lots more information online on specific services—but this pack is intended to support you in learning how to navigate the NHS in Worcestershire, and learning which providers can support with each aspect of your health.

We hope you feel at home in Worcestershire, and find the NHS helpful in providing health and care to you and your family.

Do you need emergency assistance?

Call 999 immediately if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- loss of consciousness
- a sudden confused state
- fits that are not stopping
- chest pain
- breathing difficulties
- stroke
- severe burns or scalds
- severe bleeding that cannot be stopped
- severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis)
- major trauma such as a road traffic collision
- feelings of self-harm or suicide



General Practice.

Your GP surgery should be your first contact if you have a health problem, unless it's an emergency (in which case, turn to page 12 of this guide).

Anyone in England can register with a GP for free. You don't need proof of identity or a fixed address – everyone is welcome in General Practice. However, if you do have these documents it can help us to register you faster – so please bring them with you when you register with a GP.

GP surgeries are run by a team of GPs, nurses, and other professionals who can support you in managing both new and ongoing health conditions.

Your GP practice may offer you a telephone, video or face-to-face appointment, depending on the nature of the problem—and their reception teams are trained to offer you the type of appointment you need, with the right member of their team.

Where appropriate, they can prescribe medication, send you for scans and tests, and refer you on to specialists who can support with specific conditions – so they should be your first point of contact in managing many aspects of your care.

If you need a translator or chaperone to support you, let the receptionist know before your appointment and they'll do their best to arrange this for you.



Care Navigators.

Care Navigators working in practice reception teams are trained to know what's available to you at your surgery and in your area.

They'll ask you about your health problem, and book you an appointment with the right professional or service.

Clinical Pharmacists.

Clinical Pharmacists are experts in medicines. They support those with conditions like asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure or anyone taking multiple medicines.

They work with GPs, pharmacies and hospitals to ensure that medicine services are joined up, and many can also prescribe medicines.



Physiotherapists.

Physiotherapists in general practice are experts in musculoskeletal conditions.

They are able to assess, diagnose and treat a range of complex muscle and joint conditions to prevent you from having to go to hospital.

They can arrange access to further treatment, investigations and specialists when needed.



Paramedics.

Paramedics are used to working with people with a variety of health conditions from coughs and minor injuries to more serious conditions such as asthma and heart attacks.

They work alongside GPs and help manage routine or urgent appointments, telephone triage (assessment of urgency of illness or injury) and home visits.



General Practice Teams.

Your GP surgery will be made up of a variety of clinicians and administrators who can help you access the treatment you need.

There may be a waiting list for some of these clinicians, and you may need to visit a practice or centre that isn't your usual GP in order to access them.

Physician Associates.

Physician Associates are trained and qualified to diagnose and treat a wide range of health conditions.

They work alongside GPs to provide care to people, particularly those with long-term conditions who often benefit from being able to see the same healthcare professional.



General Practice Teams.

Your GP surgery will be made up of a variety of clinicians and administrators who can help you access the treatment you need.

There may be a waiting list for some of these services, and you may need to visit a practice or centre that isn't your usual GP in order to access them.

Mental Health Therapists & Practitioners.

Mental health practitioners in General Practice specialise in mental health and use a range of talking therapies to help people with common mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Referral to a mental health practitioner can take place via your GP, or through the Healthy Minds self-referral service.



Social Prescribing Link Workers.

Social prescribing involves helping people to improve their health and wellbeing by connecting them to activities in the community.

Link Workers connect those feeling lonely, overwhelmed or in need of help to a range of local support, from community and activity groups to work, debt or housing advice.



Health Care Assistants.

Healthcare Assistants work under the guidance of a nurse or another healthcare professional.

They help with routine health checks such as blood testing and blood pressure monitoring, dressings and stitch removal – as well as providing patients with general health and wellbeing advice.





General Practice Nurses.

Nurses undertake a range of roles and are involved in almost all aspects of a patient's care.

As well as providing services such as wound care, immunisations and administration of medicines, they run health checks and clinics for those with long-term conditions such as asthma, heart disease and diabetes.

Advanced Clinical Practitioners.

Advanced Clinical Practitioners come from a range of clinical backgrounds such as nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy and paramedics.

They have the knowledge and skills to manage all aspects of patient care—including diagnosing and treating health conditions, ordering tests and interpreting results, and prescribing medication.



GPs.

GPs oversee all aspects of patient care. They meet regularly with other members of the practice team to plan joint approaches to coordinate a patient's care.

All other members of the practice team work under the supervision of a GP.

They can help with diagnosing and treating health conditions, prescribing medications, and referring you for other treatment if you need it.

General Practice Teams.

Your GP surgery will be made up of a variety of clinicians and administrators who can help you access the treatment you need.

There may be a waiting list for some of these services, and you may need to visit a practice or centre that isn't your usual GP in order to access them.





How to register.

You can find your nearest GP practice by visiting the Find a GP service online. Visit nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp, and type your postcode in the box to find a list of GP practices near you.

To register with a GP, you'll need to complete a GMS1 form. Most practices will have a copy of this on their websites for you to download, but you can also access a copy here: gov.uk/government/publications/gms1

You may also need to complete a health questionnaire when you register with your local practice. Each practice has their own health questionnaire, so this may be different depending on where you go.

If there's anything you're not sure of, talk to the reception team at your practice, who will be happy to help.

Pharmacy.



Pharmacists are experts in medicines who can help you with minor health concerns.

As qualified healthcare professionals, they can offer clinical advice and over-the-counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, tummy trouble and aches and pains.

If symptoms suggest it's something more serious, pharmacists have the right training to make sure you get the help you need. For example they will tell you if you need to see a GP, nurse or other healthcare professional.

All pharmacists train for 5 years in the use of medicines. They are also trained in managing minor illnesses and providing health and wellbeing advice.

Many pharmacies are open until late and at weekends. You do not need an appointment.

Most pharmacies have a private consultation room where you can discuss issues with pharmacy staff without being overheard.


You can find your nearest pharmacy by visiting [nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy) and typing in your postcode.

Collecting and Paying for Prescriptions

If your GP or other consultant has recommended a medication for you, you'll have to visit a pharmacy to collect this. In England, there is a charge for prescriptions – though in some circumstances this may not apply.

If you do have to pay for your prescriptions, and have regular medications on repeat, you may wish to consider getting a Prescription Prepayment Certificate.

This covers all your NHS prescriptions, no matter how many you need, for a fixed monthly fee. For those who have two or more medications each month, this can save a considerable amount of money every year.



A woman with her hair in a ponytail, wearing blue scrubs, is looking out a window with a view of greenery. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a hospital or clinic setting.

NHS 111.

[NHS 111](#) is a service that allows you to get healthcare advice, 24 hours a day.

You can either call 111 from your phone, or visit 111.nhs.uk for instant online advice. The online service can tell you:

- where to get help for your symptoms, if you're not sure what to do
- how to find general health information and advice
- where to get an emergency supply of your prescribed medicine
- how to get a repeat prescription

Using 111 helps us to make sure you're getting the right treatment, in the right place. They can connect you to a nurse, emergency dentist or even a GP, and can arrange a face-to-face appointment if you need one.

A doctor in a white coat is holding a tablet that displays an X-ray of a hand. The X-ray shows the bones of the hand and wrist. The doctor's face is partially visible in the background, looking at the tablet. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a clinical setting.

Minor Injuries Units.

MIUs can help you with cuts, grazes, wounds, sprains, minor eye injuries, strains and minor burns. We have local MIUs in Malvern, Evesham, Tenbury, Kidderminster and Bromsgrove.

Use [NHS 111](#) before your visit - as they may be able to offer you an appointment.

Find out more about our local MIUs, including opening times and the services offered, at hacw.nhs.uk/MIU



What to do in an emergency.

A&E departments deal with genuine life-threatening emergencies, such as:

- loss of consciousness
- a sudden confused state
- fits that are not stopping
- chest pain
- breathing difficulties
- severe bleeding that cannot be stopped
- severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis)
- severe burns or scalds
- stroke
- major trauma such as a road traffic collision
- feelings of self-harm or suicide

If you or someone around you is experiencing any of these symptoms, you should call 999.

Less severe injuries can be treated in Minor Injuries Units.

Received a vaccine abroad?

Many vaccination centres, such as the Artrix in Bromsgrove Three Counties Showground in Malvern, and St Peter's Baptist Church in Worcester, can validate your overseas vaccines for you.

You'll need to make an appointment in advance. You can do this by visiting nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/tell-nhs-about-coronavirus-vaccinations-abroad

Covid-19 Vaccinations.

Everyone in England has the right to a free Covid-19 vaccination on the NHS. This helps to protect you and the people around you from severe illness from Covid-19.

If you're aged 16 and over, you'll be offered a first, second and booster dose—and if you are aged 75 or over, or if you have a weakened immune system, you'll also be offered an additional booster.

Patients aged 5-15 are also eligible for the Covid-19 vaccine, with two doses recommended for the best possible protection.

You can get a Covid-19 vaccine without an appointment at walk-in centres across the county.

To find out about walk-in appointments near you, visit www.swhealthcare.org.uk/walk-ins.



Children's Health.

If your child is unwell, you can use any of the services outlined in the last few pages to find the right support—whether that's from [111 Online](#), a Minor Injuries Unit, a pharmacy, or of course, your local GP.

Health Visitors and School Nurses are registered nurses who have had additional training in public health nursing. They provide support to all families and will support you from pregnancy until your child is 19 years old.

The Health Visiting Team will assess your child when they are born, when your baby is 2 weeks old, when they are approximately 8 weeks old, 1 years old and 2 ½ years old—and School Nurses provide support for those aged 5 and over. Information on both of these services can be found at www.startingwellworcs.nhs.uk/home.

If your child has a disability, you should make an appointment with a member of the team at your GP practice as soon as you're able. They'll be able to ensure your child's treatment continues from that you've received elsewhere, and will be able to refer you to specialists if you need them. If you need a translator or chaperone, please let the practice know in advance, and they'll be able to arrange this for you.

There are a range of online resources for you to support your child's emotional wellbeing available on the KOOOTH website which you can find at www.kooth.com or visit the CAMHS website at www.hacw.nhs.uk/camhs.

If your child has complex needs, there is also support available from Worcestershire County Council. Find more information and support at worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20501/children_young_people_and_families

8 weeks.

- 6-in-1 vaccine
- Rotavirus vaccine
- MenB

12 weeks.

- 6-in-1 vaccine (2nd dose)
- Pneumococcal (PCV) vaccine
- Rotavirus vaccine (2nd dose)

16 weeks.

- 6-in-1 vaccine (3rd dose)
- MenB (2nd dose)

1 year.

- Hib/MenC (1st dose)
- MMR (1st dose)
- Pneumococcal (PCV) vaccine (2nd dose)
- MenB (3rd dose)

2 to 10 years.

- Flu vaccine (every year)

3 years and 4 months.

- MMR (2nd dose)
- 4-in-1 pre-school booster

12 to 13 years.

- HPV booster

Childhood Immunisations.

All children in England are offered a number of vaccines for free on the NHS. This helps to protect them from serious illnesses, and reduces the spread of these illnesses in our community.

It's important that vaccines are given on time for the best protection, but if you or your child missed a vaccine, contact your GP practice, who will arrange an appointment with a nurse or other member of the team to catch up.

Are these vaccines safe for my child?

Yes – and vaccination is the most important thing we can do to protect ourselves and our children.

They prevent up to 3 million deaths worldwide every year.

All vaccines are thoroughly tested to make sure they will not harm you or your child. It often takes many years for a vaccine to make it through the trials and tests it needs to pass for approval.

What about Covid-19 vaccinations?

All children aged 5 and over are eligible to receive Covid-19 vaccinations free on the NHS. You can find out more on the Covid-19 Vaccinations page of this booklet.



Women's Health.

Pregnancy

If you're pregnant, you should make an appointment with a member of the team at your GP practice, who will be able to ensure you're offered the right support and know what to do at each stage of your pregnancy.

There's also lots of information online at [nhs.uk/pregnancy](https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy), including a week-by-week guide to your pregnancy.

Health Screening

When you register with a GP, you'll be asked about any underlying conditions you have – such as asthma or diabetes. If you have any of these conditions, you'll be invited for an annual health check by the NHS, which may take place virtually, by phone, or face-to-face.

Patients aged between 40 and 74 are also eligible for health checks on the NHS, even if they don't have underlying conditions. A nurse will check your blood pressure, cholesterol and other factors to ensure you're fit and well, and will advise on any conditions you may have.

If you're aged between 25 and 64, you'll be offered annual cervical screening to ensure check the health of your cervix. This is designed to prevent cancer, so you should attend this appointment as soon as you're invited to do so.

Anyone registered with a GP as female will be invited for NHS breast screening every 3 years between the ages of 50 and 71. You'll get a letter in the post inviting you to book when it's time for you to do so.



Men's Health.

When you register with a GP, you'll be asked about any underlying conditions you have – such as asthma or diabetes. If you have any of these conditions, you'll be invited for a health check by the NHS, which may take place virtually, by phone, or face-to-face.

Patients aged between 40 and 74 are also eligible for health checks on the NHS, even if they don't have underlying conditions. A nurse will check your blood pressure, cholesterol and other factors to ensure you're fit and well, and will advise on any conditions you may have.

Men's Cancers

There are certain cancers which only affect men—such as prostate and testicular cancer. You can visit the NHS website to find out how to check for symptoms—and if you experience any of these, you should contact your GP practice, where a member of their team will be able to assist.

For information on prostate cancer, visit: [nhs.uk/conditions/prostate-cancer](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/prostate-cancer) – and for information on testicular cancer, visit: [nhs.uk/conditions/testicular-cancer](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/testicular-cancer).

Sexual Health.

Contraception

If you are on regular contraception – such as the birth control pill, a coil or other hormonal contraceptive – you can make an appointment with a member of the team at your GP practice to arrange a new prescription.

If you need emergency contraception, you can visit your local pharmacist who will be able to provide this for you.

Worcestershire Integrated Sexual Health Service

Worcestershire Integrated Sexual Health Service (WISH) provides friendly, non-judgemental, specialist services across Worcestershire, helping you to manage your sexual health.

Their website has a wealth of information on STIs and HIV, as well as all aspects of sexual health for men and women. Visit [hacw.nhs.uk/knowyourstuff](https://www.hacw.nhs.uk/knowyourstuff) to find the information that's right for you.





Mental Health.

All of us at some point feel low, anxious, worried or depressed. It is completely normal but it can also start to impact what we do and who we are and when we reach that point it is important to get help to prevent these feelings getting worse. We understand that seeking support is a big step.

If you're struggling with your mental health, you can talk to a member of the team at your GP practice, or use one of our local mental health services, such as Healthy Minds. They can offer you a range of support, including:

- Online therapy which you do at your own pace and in your own time
- Groups and Courses where you can share (as much or as little as you wish) and learn from other people
- Or more traditional 1:1 support

They can also help you access some of the great resources available in your local area which might be more appropriate for you, or which can complement the service they provide.

To access the service you must be aged 16 or over and registered with a GP in Worcestershire. You can self-refer online at : healthyminds.whct.nhs.uk/worcestershire

Alternatively you can call: 0300 013 57 27 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

If you are having a mental health crisis and need urgent support, you can call the 24-hour helpline on **0808 196 9127**, 7 days a week.

There are also charities which offer confidential advice from trained volunteers. You can talk about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult:

- Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans, or email: jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours
- Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line, or text "YM" if you're under 19

If you're under 19, you can also call 0800 1111 to talk to Childline. The number will not appear on your phone bill.




Dentistry.

The NHS will provide any clinically necessary treatment needed to keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy and free of pain.

Not all dentists in England provide NHS services, but you can find out which ones do in your area by visiting nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist and entering your postcode.

Dentistry is one of the few NHS services where you have to pay a contribution towards the cost of your care. You can find out the costs of different dental treatments here: nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/dental-costs/understanding-nhs-dental-charges

If you need emergency dental treatment, you should contact the dentist you're registered with, or use [NHS 111](https://nhs.uk/111) who will be able to refer you to an urgent dental service. Your GP practice won't be able to help with dental treatments, so please don't call them for this - and A&E can only help with life-threatening emergencies.





Sight & Hearing Care.

The NHS recommends that you get your eyes tested every two years.

You can book an appointment for eye care at an optician. Use this page to find an optician near you: [nhs.uk/service-search/find-an-optician](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-an-optician)

Some people are entitled to a free eye test on the NHS, as well as a voucher towards the cost of your glasses or contact lenses. Check with your optician before you book to find out if you're eligible for free tests or vouchers.

If you have an urgent problem with your eyes, you should use [111](https://www.nhs.uk/111) for immediate advice – as they'll be able to advise the best place to seek emergency treatment.

You can also get a free hearing test on the NHS. A GP may refer you to a hearing specialist (audiologist) who can do the test.

It could take a few weeks to see a specialist so it might be quicker to get tested somewhere else, like at a large pharmacy or opticians. This is often free, but you should check with the provider beforehand to check.



Health at Home.

There are a number of medications you can buy over-the-counter in the UK that we recommend you keep stocked up at home.

You can help keep local NHS services clear for people who need urgent treatment by trying these remedies first– as often, they'll solve the problem without you needing to visit your GP:

- Indigestion remedies
- Hay fever medicines
- Anti-diarrhoea tablets
- Cold and flu medicines
- Pain relief
- First aid kit
- Sunscreen

Remember to always keep to the dosage instructions, and make sure all medicines are in date.



Living Well.

Prevention is always better than cure – and there are steps that you can take to protect your health.

The NHS recommends a healthy, balanced lifestyle as the key to living well – and you can find a range of resources online to support you with this.

NHS Better Health ([nhs.uk/better-health](https://www.nhs.uk/better-health)) includes advice on diet and exercise, cutting down on smoking and alcohol, and looking after your mental health.

There may also be local community groups and council-run activities in your area—so we recommend dropping into your local community centre and finding out what’s available near you.

I have a cough, cold, sore throat, tummy trouble or an ache or pain.

Visit your local pharmacist as your first call here – as many pharmacists can offer support with these conditions, and will tell you if you need to visit a GP or other service.

I have a cut, graze, wound, sprain, minor eye injury, strain or minor burn.

These can usually be treated by a Minor Injuries Unit. Visit [111 online](#) or call 111 first for advice – they may be able to book you an appointment if you need one.

I have a pre-existing condition I need advice and support with.

Contact your GP practice, who will be able to arrange a phone call or face-to-face appointment with a member of their team.

I have a new illness, lump or bump, or pain that isn't eased by over-the-counter remedies.

Contact your GP practice, who will be able to arrange a phone call or face-to-face appointment with a member of their team.

I am having problems with my mental health.

You can self-refer to the Healthy Minds service by visiting healthyminds.whct.nhs.uk/Worcestershire, or calling 0300 013 57 27 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

If you need urgent mental health support, you can call the 24-hour helpline on 0808 196 9127, 7 days a week.

I am having problems with my teeth or eyes.

Contact your nearest NHS dentist or optician, who will be able to help.

Which NHS service do I need?

You can use this quick reference guide to see which service is most appropriate for you.

If you have a problem not answered here, visit 111 online at 111.nhs.uk to find the right advice based on your symptoms.

I need emergency medical assistance.

If you are experiencing any of the below symptoms, you should go to A&E or call 999 immediately:

- loss of consciousness
- a sudden confused state
- fits that are not stopping
- chest pain
- breathing difficulties
- severe bleeding that cannot be stopped
- severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis)
- severe burns or scalds
- stroke
- major trauma such as a road traffic collision
- feelings of self-harm or suicide