

Staying Well this Winter

A guide to your local health services in Suffolk and North East Essex



With all the different ways to access health services, it can be confusing to know the best place to go. Our guide can help you make the right choice.

Self-Care

You can treat most minor illnesses and injuries at home.

Keep your medicine cabinet well-stocked with essentials like painkillers, antihistamine, cold and flu remedies, anti-diarrhoea and indigestion medicine. If you have children, make sure you've got the right medicines according to their age.

The NHS App

If you have a smart phone or tablet, the NHS app is a secure way to access a range of NHS services.

To use the app, you must be registered with a GP surgery in England and aged 13 or over. There are many things you can do on the app including:

- Use the NHS symptom checker
- Order your repeat prescriptions
- Get health advice
- See your test results and access other information on your health record
- See your NHS COVID vaccination status.

More information is available at www.nhs.uk/nhs-app

NHS Online

The NHS website www.nhs.uk provides lots of information to help you manage your health and wellbeing. This includes:

A to Z guide to Health	A guide to health conditions, symptoms and treatments, including what to do and when to get help.
A to Z guide to Medicines	Find out how your medicine works, how and when to take it, possible side effects and answers to your common questions.
NHS Services	Find your nearest NHS services, including pharmacies, GPs, dentists and A&E and how to use their services.
Living Well advices	Advice, tips and tools to help you make the best choices about your health and wellbeing.
Social care and support guide	If you or someone you know needs help with day-to-day living because of illness or disability, the website explains your options and where you can get support.
Pregnancy	A guide which includes information about trying for a baby, pregnancy, labour and birth.
Coronavirus (COVID-19)	Get NHS advice about COVID-19, including symptoms, testing, vaccination and self-isolation.

Pharmacy

If you're suffering from a cold, cuts and grazes or minor illnesses, your pharmacist will offer you remedies, so you don't have to see a GP or nurse.

Your local pharmacist is trained to help you with the safe use of prescription, repeat prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Pharmacies are often open until late and at weekends, and many have a quiet area where you can talk to a pharmacist in private.

Self-Referral

There are some services in Suffolk and North East Essex where you can 'self-refer', by contacting the provider directly.

The Musculoskeletal Service (MSK)

If you have joint, muscle or bone problems, such as back, hips, knees, ankles and hands, you can self-refer to the local musculoskeletal (MSK) service. They can diagnose and treat your condition with physiotherapy or may refer you to another specialist medical team. Your GP can make a referral, or if you live in Suffolk you can self-refer by visiting www.ahpsuffolk.co.uk

Access to the service in north east Essex is by referral from the patient's own GP - Musculoskeletal Service - North East Essex Community Services (www.neecommunity.org.uk)

Wellbeing Service

If you are aged over 18 and are not your usual self, because you feel worried, anxious or depressed about certain issues in your life, you can contact your GP or local wellbeing service. Our local wellbeing services provide a range of free and confidential talking therapies and specialist support to help you to feel better.

Wellbeing Suffolk - www.wellbeingnands.co.uk - 0300 123 1503 - Phone lines are open Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) from 8am to 8pm.

Therapy for You - North East Essex - www.therapyforyou.co.uk - 01206 334001 - Phone lines are open Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) from 9am to 5pm.

Self-help materials including tips, guides, tools and activities are also available online: www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/

Local GP Services

If you've been unwell for more than 48 hours and need medical help, you can book an appointment with a healthcare professional at your GP practice.

When you contact the GP practice, you will be asked a number of questions to help direct you to the healthcare professional best suited for your health care needs.

GP practices provide many ways you can access their services including online consultations, telephone, video and face-to-face appointments.

If you have the NHS app you can use this to access some of the services available from your GP practice.

NHS 111

You can call NHS111 for help with an urgent medical problem.

You can contact the NHS111 service online at www.111.nhs.uk or you can call **111, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

Your symptoms will be assessed and you will be provided with healthcare advice. This may include:

- Self-care
- Visiting a pharmacy
- Contacting your GP practice
- Contacting an urgent treatment or walk-in centre
- Going to A&E.

If needed, NHS111 can also send an ambulance, or where available can also book appointment times to some services.

Emergency Dental Issues

If you have an emergency dental issue, please don't call your GP. Instead, please ring 111 who can help with an emergency dental number.

Local Urgent Care Services

If you are very unwell and have an illness or an injury that requires urgent attention, but it's not an emergency (an emergency is when it is life-threatening), NHS 111 can make you an appointment at a local urgent treatment centre (UTC).

The urgent treatment centres are at:

Clacton Hospital	1 Tower Road, Clacton C015 1LH, open daily 8am - 8pm
Colchester Hospital	Turner Road, Colchester C04 5JL, Open daily from 7am - midnight
Fryatt Hospital	Harwich, Open daily from 9am - 5pm The service can be accessed by contacting NHS 111

Mental Health Crisis

If you are currently experiencing a mental health crisis or supporting someone in crisis and need urgent help, 24-hour support is available every day for adults, children or young people.

If you need urgent medical advice, you can call the NHS free on **0808 196 3493** (for Suffolk) and **111, option 2** (for north east Essex).

You can talk to Samaritans anytime on **116 123**.

Talking Therapies

The impact of the pandemic on young people's mental health has been significant. During the winter months, it is important that you seek support if you feel you continually depressed or anxious. Please consider contacting the Talking Therapies services for support - 0300 123 1503 (for Wellbeing Suffolk, Monday to Friday 8 am to 8pm, excluding Bank Holidays) and 111, option 2 (for north east Essex).

Pregnancy and Maternity Services

Our local hospitals and community midwives provide a range of services to support you through your pregnancy and birth.

You can refer yourself directly to maternity services. Alternatively, you can visit your GP practice for a referral. Your first contact with a midwife should happen before your first scan. For early, urgent pregnancy advice, please contact your GP. For routine pregnancy information, please speak to your midwife.

Flu and Covid Vaccination

As well as accessing the right service, there is plenty we can all do to take care of ourselves this Autumn and Winter.

Please do have the Flu vaccination – available from our local GP practice and pharmacy. In addition, please take up the offer of the Covid vaccination when invited to do so.

We have a range of walk in clinics available which are publicised on the Suffolk and north East Essex vaccination website – www.sneevaccine.org.uk

Emergency Services - Ambulance and A&E

Emergency services should only be used for life-threatening illnesses or accidents which require immediate, intensive treatment.

In an emergency you should ring the ambulance service (via 999) or go to the hospital's Accident and Emergency (A&E) department. If it's not life-threatening or an emergency, please use the other options available to you.

Look after yourself during Autumn/Winter

- Look after your ears – don't let them build up with wax. Speak to a pharmacist about earwax build-up. They can give advice and suggest treatments.
- Protect yourself and others by keeping up to date with vaccinations such as COVID and flu vaccinations. More details about the covid vaccinations can be found at www.sneevaccine.org.uk
- Please ensure you give plenty of notice around repeat prescriptions. Little notification puts a strain on other services when they are contacted at short notice for repeat prescriptions.
- If you're invited for an NHS Health check or for an assessment with a long term condition (such as asthma) that you may live with, please do attend. Prevention is often better than cure or a quote from a clinician to that affect?

Vaccines are the most effective way to prevent infectious diseases.

Having a vaccination is the most important thing you can do to protect yourself and your family against ill health.