

How to keep safe when getting medicines or treatment *online*



Online healthcare services and apps can help people take more control of their health, by getting access to care easily and when it suits them.

You need to make sure any medicine, treatment or health advice you get is **safe and right for you...**

These **six top tips** from UK health organisations will help you keep safe if you decide to go online:

- 1 Check if the online healthcare service and healthcare professionals working there are registered with UK regulators**
- 2 Ask questions about how the service works**
- 3 Answer questions honestly about your health and medical history**
- 4 Find out your options for treatment and how to take any medicines you're prescribed**
- 5 Expect to be asked for consent for information to be shared with other healthcare professionals involved in your care**
- 6 Check what after-care you will receive**

**Find out
more**





Here's more information on *what to look out for and why*:



1

Check if the online healthcare service and the healthcare professionals working there are registered with UK regulators

This will help you make sure you get advice and treatment that is right for you and won't cause you harm.



2

Ask questions about how the service works

It's important to decide if a service is right for you.

Ask them:

- Will I be charged for treatment?
- Am I being asked to leave my current GP surgery?
- Can I have a face-to-face appointment locally if I need one?

Make sure you read and understand the information you are given about the service.



3

Answer questions honestly about your health and medical history

This will help you make sure you receive safe and effective care and medicines that meet UK standards. Don't use websites that will send you medicines without asking you questions about your health. This is unsafe and may be illegal.



4

Find out your options for treatment and how to take any medicines you're prescribed

The healthcare professional should:

- give you clear advice
- explain your options in a way you can understand
- only prescribe if it is safe for them to do so
- give you written information about any medicines you receive, and explain any potential side-effects

Remember, you can refuse treatment.



5

Expect to be asked for your consent for information to be shared with other healthcare professionals involved in your care (but not for sexual health services)

Giving consent for the prescriber to see your medical records will help to make sure you receive safe care. It is also important that your regular prescriber knows what treatment you've had, so they can give you safe care in the future.

You may also be asked for proof of your identity. This is to check that a child or other vulnerable person is not using your identity to get medicines that may be unsafe or inappropriate for them.



6

Check what after-care you will receive

You should be told who is responsible for any monitoring or further treatment you may need. Make sure you know who to contact if you feel unwell or have any follow-up questions.

If you want more information

NHS websites have straightforward health information you can trust. There are separate websites for England ([nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) >), Scotland ([nhsinform.scot](https://www.nhsinform.scot) >), Wales ([wales.nhs.uk](https://www.wales.nhs.uk) >) and Northern Ireland ([online.hscni.net](https://www.online.hscni.net)).

Below are some specific guides you may also find useful:

- > [How to check if a service or healthcare professional is registered in the UK](#), and what to do if you're unhappy with the care you receive.
- > [The standards you can expect of UK healthcare professionals](#) giving 'remote' consultations and prescribing online.

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