



## Self Treatment

of

### *Common Illness & Accidents*

Many common aches and pains can be simply treated at home without the need to consult a doctor - most minor illnesses resolve within 4 days.

Over the counter medicines are helpful in many cases.

**Your first port of call should be your local pharmacist who will be happy to advise you.**

**Burns** For small household burns, apply a large quantity of cold running water to the affected area as soon as possible and maintain this until the pain subsides. This may take as long as 15 minutes. If the skin is unbroken but blistered, apply a loose dry dressing and observe.

If the burn is large you should seek medical advice as soon as possible - you may need to attend a hospital. Chemical and electrical burns should be seen by a doctor.

**Sunburn** Prevent sun burn by using appropriate sun block for your skin type, covering up with loose clothing and staying out of the sun between 10am - 2pm. Children are particularly susceptible to sunburn and great care should be taken to avoid over-exposure to the harmful effects of the sun. Treat as for other burns with cold water to remove the heat. Calamine lotion will relieve the irritation, whilst paracetamol will also help.

**There is risk of dehydration with all burns so maintain your fluid intake.**

**Dental Emergencies** You should see your dentist for regular check-ups, there should be an out of hours emergency service available once you have registered at a Dental Practice. Dental problems are the province of dentists not doctors and they can prescribe both antibiotics and painkillers, just as doctors do. Holiday makers and people not registered with a dentist can consult any NHS dentist for advice. If you have difficulty in finding one please ring NHS 111. If you or your child has a tooth knocked out, carefully pick up the tooth but do not attempt to wash or clean it, put it straight into a little cold milk and take the

patient to your own dentist.

**Head Lice** These creatures, contrary to popular belief, prefer clean hair and are not a sign of poor hygiene. Medicated shampoos and lotions are available from the Chemist without prescription. However, it is now recommended that you wash the hair thoroughly and use normal hair conditioner quite thickly and then comb with a fine tooth comb to dislodge any eggs. Repeat this every 3 days until the problem resolves itself. The special shampoos and lotions can cause irritation to children with sensitive skin and may not eradicate the problem.

**Cystitis** This is not uncommon in women. It causes a burning sensation and frequent passing of urine. Drink plenty of fluids. If you have a fever, or if the symptoms last more than 48 hours, consult your doctor.

**Minor Cuts and Grazes** Wash the wound thoroughly with water and a little soap. To stop bleeding, apply a clean handkerchief or dressing firmly to the wound for about five minutes. Cover with a clean dry dressing.

**Sickness and Diarrhoea** Dehydration can be a problem. It is best to drink sips of water or lemonade initially, and then introduce a light diet such as a biscuit, toast or clear soup. Dairy products, such as milk, eggs, yogurts should be avoided as these often aggravate diarrhoea. If the symptoms persist for more than 48-72 hours, consult your doctor. In very young children and babies, Diarrhoea needs careful attention. Dehydration can be serious. The child should be taken off solids and given liquids, but not milk, until the Diarrhoea settles. If the symptoms

persist for longer than 24 hours or are accompanied by vomiting or weakness, consult your doctor. Seek medical advice if you suspect food poisoning, as a sample may be needed.

**Sore Throat, Colds & Flu** Have an annual flu vaccination if you are in an 'at risk' group or aged 65+.

If you have a headache or are feverish, take aspirin or paracetamol. Rest and drink plenty of fluids. Many over the counter preparations are available to help combat the symptoms. Seek medical advice if the patient has a persistently high temperature for 48hrs and cannot get out of bed, or is very young, very old or has an existing respiratory condition.

**Sprains** Firstly apply a cold compress, containing ice if possible, for 15 to 30 minutes, to reduce the swelling. Elevate the affected area, take pain killers and rest. If not resolving, seek medical advice as sometimes an X-ray is necessary. These do take time to heal completely.

**Nose Bleeds** Sit in a chair (leaning forward with your mouth open) and pinch your nose just below the bone for approximately 10 minutes, by which time the bleeding should have stopped. Avoid hot drinks or hot food for 24 hours. If symptoms persist, consult your doctor.

### **Insect Bites and Stings**

These may cause irritation, inflammation, swelling and blisters. Try to prevent these by covering exposed skin when outdoors and using insect repellents. TRY NOT TO SCRATCH. Antihistamine tablets and creams can be



obtained from the chemist without prescription but be careful to choose a non-drowsy option if driving. Alcohol should be avoided.

**Bee stings** should be scraped away rather than plucked in order to avoid squeezing the contents of the venom sac into the wound.

**Chickenpox** On the first day a rash appears as small red patches about 3-4mm across. Within a few hours of these developing, small blisters appear in the centre of these patches. During the next three or four days further patches will appear and the earlier ones will turn crusty and fall off.

Oily calamine lotion may be applied to soothe the often severe itching. Cool baths may also help.

The most infectious period is from two or three days before the rash appears and up to five days after this date. Children may return to school as soon as the last 'crusts' have dropped off.

**Shingles** can be very painful – if you suspect you may have shingles, seek medical advice as treatment may help if given within 72 hours of the first symptoms. You can only catch shingles if you have had chickenpox and it is unusual to catch chicken pox from shingles. Vaccination is offered to certain age groups.

**Measles, Mumps and Rubella** can be prevented by immunisation – please check that you and your family are up to date with offered vaccinations.

**German Measles (Rubella)** The rash appears during the first day and usually covers the body, arms and legs in small pink patches about 2-4 mm and doesn't itch. No other symptoms are usually present apart from occasional aching joints. It is

infectious from two days before the rash appears, until the rash disappears, in about four or five days from that date.

The only danger is to unborn babies and, therefore, it is important that all contacts are informed in order that anyone who may be pregnant can contact their doctor.

**Measles** The rash is blotchy and red and appears on the face and body around the fourth day of illness. It is at its most infectious from two or three days before the rash appears until eight or ten days after that date.

**Mumps** Symptoms are swelling of the glands in front of one ear often followed, after a couple of days, by swelling in front of the other ear. It is infectious from two or three days before the swelling appears until eight or ten days after that date. If the pain is severe you should consult your doctor.

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**Wimborne Minor Injury Unit  
01202 856436**

**For cuts and grazes, sprains, strains and broken limbs, minor head injury, bites and stings, minor burns and scalds**

This is a Nurse Led Service  
8.30 12.30, 13.30 – 16.00 Mon – Fri  
Call at Wimborne Hospital  
(no appointment needed)  
or telephone for advice.  
X-ray available for acute injuries

**Serious and life-threatening conditions should attend A&E or dial 999**

**For Out Of Hours help dial 111**

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