

# The GP out-of-hours service isn't for minor illnesses.

It's for urgent problems that really can't wait. You can help us free up the GP out-of-hours service for those who really need it. In general – wait if you can, call if you can't.

**STAY WELL THIS WINTER**



Did you know the most common cause of winter hospital admissions is respiratory illness? That's why it's important for at-risk groups like older people or those with long-term health conditions such as asthma, COPD or heart disease, to keep warm and get the flu jab.

This winter, if you need to use health services, there are different options available to help you find the right expert care to treat your condition. Picking the service most appropriate for your symptoms means you get the right treatment in the right place.

The GP out-of-hours service is for urgent medical problems that can't wait until your GP surgery re-opens. It is an important service offered by five different out-of-hours providers to everyone registered with a GP practice in Northern Ireland – but, remember, it's not an alternative to the normal everyday GP service.



[Find out](#) more about the different health service options available in Northern Ireland– from self-care, community pharmacists, minor injury units and more.

Have a sneak peek at the latest Stay Well advert about the most appropriate use of GP out-of-hours due out late December.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP US

- [Retweet and share our social media posts](#)
- [Post Stay Well messages on your social media pages](#)
- [Use #StayWellNI when promoting health services](#)
- [Print copies of our posters](#)

## GP out-of-hours is not for...

- Repeat prescriptions
- Dental problems
- Minor ailments that can be treated at a pharmacy
- If you are too busy to visit your GP during the day
- Injury or trauma— go to your Emergency Department
- When your life is at risk—call 999

**STAY WELL THIS WINTER**



## #StayWellNI

Thanks to everyone that shared our messages and created their own. Here's a pick of the best [social media posts](#)...



## Choose the right service

- Self-care is the best choice to treat minor illnesses, ailments and injuries
- Get advice from your pharmacist if you start to feel unwell
- Contact your GP for medical advice, examinations, prescriptions and ongoing care for more longstanding or chronic conditions
- GP out-of-hours is available if you require urgent medical care when your GP surgery is closed
- Emergency Departments provide the highest level of emergency care for patients, especially those with sudden serious illness or severe trauma
- Always call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk