

## 1. Varicose veins

If you have varicose veins and they do not cause you any discomfort, you may not need to visit a GP.

Varicose veins are rarely a serious condition and they do not usually require treatment.

But speak to a GP if:

- your varicose veins are causing you pain or discomfort
- the skin over your veins is sore and irritated
- the aching in your legs is causing irritation at night and disturbing your sleep

Speak immediately to a GP or call 111 if your varicose veins start bleeding. You may need urgent treatment.

### ➤ Seeing a GP

Varicose veins are diagnosed by their appearance. The GP will examine your legs while you're standing to check for signs of swelling.

You may also be asked to describe any pain you have and whether there are situations that make your varicose veins worse.

For example, some women find their menstrual cycle (period) affects their varicose veins.

The GP will also want to know if you're at an increased risk of developing varicose veins, such as:

- having a family history of varicose veins
- being pregnant
- whether you have a healthy body mass index (BMI)
- having deep vein thrombosis (a blood clot in one of the deep veins of the body)
- a history of leg injury (for example, having previously broken a bone in your leg)

### ➤ Further investigation

The GP may refer you to a vascular specialist (a doctor who specialises in veins) if you have any of the following:

- varicose veins that are causing pain, aching, discomfort, swelling, heaviness or itching
- changes in the color of the skin on your leg that may be caused by problems with the blood flow in the leg
- skin conditions affecting your leg, such as eczema, that may be caused by problems with the blood flow in the leg
- hard and painful varicose veins that may be caused by problems with the blood flow in the leg
- a healed or unhealed leg ulcer (a break in the skin that has not healed within 2 weeks) below the knee

## 2. Dengue

Dengue, also known as dengue fever, is an infection spread by mosquitoes. It's not usually serious and often gets better on its own. Some people get a more severe type of dengue, but this is rare.

### ➤ Symptoms of dengue

Dengue does not always cause symptoms.

If you do have symptoms, they usually start 4 to 10 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

Some dengue symptoms are similar to flu.

They include:

- a high temperature
- a severe headache
- pain behind your eyes
- muscle and joint pain
- feeling or being sick
- swollen glands
- a blotchy rash made up of flat or slightly raised spots – this can affect large areas of your body

### ➤ Urgent advice: Ask for an urgent GP appointment or get help from NHS 111 if:

- you feel unwell after travelling to a country where dengue is found

### ➤ Severe dengue

Some people get a more severe type of dengue a few days after they first started feeling ill, but this is rare.

You may start to feel better with your temperature returning to normal, but about 24 to 48 hours later you may get more serious symptoms.

Symptoms of severe dengue include:

- severe tummy pain
- repeatedly being sick
- fast breathing
- bleeding gums or nose
- extreme tiredness (fatigue)
- being unable to relax (restlessness)
- blood in your vomit or poo

### ➤ Immediate action required: Call 999 or go to A&E if:

- you have travelled to a country where dengue is found and you have symptoms of severe dengue

### 3. Fungal Infection

You may have a fungal nail infection if your nail is brittle, discolored or thicker than usual. These types of infections are not serious but they can take a long time to treat.

Athlete's foot is a common fungal infection that affects the feet.

➤ Check if you have a fungal nail infection

Fungal nail infections usually affect your toenails, but you can sometimes get them on your fingernails, too.

- Fungal nail infections usually start at the edge of the nail.
- The infection often spreads to all of the nail, making it thicker and turning it white or yellow.
- The nail may become brittle and crumbly. The whole nail can sometimes lift off, causing the skin around it to become swollen and painful.

➤ Symptoms of athlete's foot

One of the main symptoms of Athlete's foot is itchy white patches between your toes.

- It can cause sore and flaky patches on your feet.
- The skin can look red, but this may be less noticeable on brown or black skin.
- Sometimes the skin on your feet may become cracked or bleed.
- It can also affect your soles or sides of your feet.
- It sometimes causes fluid-filled blisters.

➤ Non-urgent advice: See a GP if:

You have a fungal nail infection that:

- is severe and treatment has not worked
- has spread to other nails

You have athlete's foot and:

- treatments from a pharmacy do not work
- you're in a lot of discomfort
- your foot or leg is hot, painful and red (the redness may be less noticeable on brown or black skin) – this could be a more serious infection
- the infection spreads to other parts of your body such as your hands
- you have diabetes – foot problems can be more serious if you have diabetes
- you have a weakened immune system – for example, you have had an organ transplant or are having chemotherapy

#### 4. Common Cold

You can often treat a cold without seeing a GP. You should begin to feel better in about 1 to 2 weeks.

➤ Check if you have a cold

Cold symptoms come on gradually over 2 to 3 days.

The main symptoms include:

- a blocked or runny nose
- sneezing
- a sore throat
- a hoarse voice
- a cough
- feeling tired and unwell

You may also have:

- a high temperature
- aching muscles
- a loss of taste and smell
- a feeling of pressure in your ears and face

Symptoms of a cold can last longer in young children. They may also be irritable, have difficulty feeding and sleeping, breathe through their mouth, and get sick after coughing.

➤ See a GP if:

- you have a high temperature for more than 3 days
- your cold symptoms get worse
- your temperature is very high or you feel hot and shivery
- you feel short of breath or have chest pain
- you're worried about your child's cold symptoms
- your cold symptoms do not get better after 10 days
- you have a cough for more than 3 weeks
- you get cold symptoms and you have a long-term medical condition (for example, diabetes, or a heart, lung or kidney condition)
- you get cold symptoms and you have a weakened immune system (for example, because you're having chemotherapy)

## 5. Pneumonia

Pneumonia is inflammation of the lungs, usually caused by an infection. Most people get better in 2 to 4 weeks, but babies, older people, and people with heart or lung conditions are at risk of getting seriously ill and may need treatment in hospital.

➤ Check if you have pneumonia

Symptoms of pneumonia can start suddenly or gradually over a few days.

They include:

- a cough – you may cough up yellow or green mucus (phlegm)
- shortness of breath
- a high temperature
- chest pain
- an aching body
- feeling very tired
- loss of appetite
- making wheezing noises when you breathe – babies may also make grunting noises
- feeling confused – this is common in older people

➤ Urgent advice: Ask for an urgent GP appointment or get help from NHS 111 if:

- you've had a cough for 3 weeks or more
- you're coughing up blood
- you have chest pain that comes and goes, or happens when breathing or coughing
- you're feeling short of breath

➤ Immediate action required: Call 999 if:

- you're struggling to breathe – you're choking, gasping and unable to speak
- you have pale, blue or blotchy skin, lips or tongue
- you suddenly feel confused – for example, you do not know where you are
- you cannot wake your baby and they feel floppy

## 6. Dimorphic Hemorrhoids

Hemorrhoids are lumps inside and around your bottom (anus). They often get better on their own after a few days.

- Check if it's hemorrhoids
  - Symptoms of hemorrhoids include:
    - bright red blood after you poo
    - an itchy anus
    - feeling like you still need to poo after going to the toilet
    - mucus in your underwear or on toilet paper after wiping your bottom
    - lumps around your anus
    - pain around your anus
- See a GP if:
  - you have symptoms of hemorrhoids and they're getting worse or there's no improvement after 7 days of treatment at home
  - you keep getting piles
  - you notice a change around your anus that is not normal for you
- Urgent advice: Ask for an urgent GP appointment or get help from NHS 111 if:
  - you have hemorrhoids and your temperature is very high or you feel hot and shivery and generally unwell
  - you have pus leaking from your hemorrhoids
- Go to A&E or call 999 if you have piles and:
  - you're bleeding non-stop
  - there's a lot of blood – for example, the toilet water turns red or you see large blood clots
  - you're in severe pain

## 7. Arthritis

Arthritis is a common condition that causes pain and inflammation in a joint.

### ➤ Symptoms of arthritis

There are lots of different types of arthritis. The symptoms you experience will vary depending on the type you have. This is why it's important to have an accurate diagnosis if you have:

- joint pain, tenderness and stiffness
- inflammation in and around the joints
- restricted movement of the joints
- warm red skin over the affected joint
- weakness and muscle wasting

## **8. Acne**

A GP can diagnose acne by looking at your skin. This involves examining your face, chest or back for the different types of spot, such as blackheads or sore, red nodules.

The severity of acne is often categorized as:

- mild – mostly whiteheads and blackheads, with a few papules and pustules
- moderate – more widespread whiteheads and blackheads, with many papules and pustules
- severe – lots of large, painful papules, pustules, nodules or cysts; you might also have some scarring



## 9. **Bronchial Asthma**

Asthma is a common lung condition that causes occasional breathing difficulties.

### ➤ Symptoms of asthma

The most common symptoms of asthma are:

- wheezing (a whistling sound when breathing)
- breathlessness
- a tight chest – it may feel like a band is tightening around it
- coughing

Many things can cause these symptoms, but they're more likely to be asthma if they:

- happen often and keep coming back
- are worse at night and early in the morning
- seem to happen in response to an asthma trigger like exercise or an allergy (such as to pollen or animals)

### ➤ Seeing a GP

The GP may ask:

- what symptoms you have
- when they happen and how often
- if anything seems to trigger them
- if you have conditions such as eczema or allergies, or a family history of them

They may suggest doing some tests to confirm if you have asthma.

## 10. Hypertension

High blood pressure does not usually have any symptoms, so the only way to find out if you have it is to get your blood pressure checked.

- A general guide for Blood pressure:
  - high blood pressure is considered to be from 140/90mmHg or more if your reading was taken at a pharmacy, GP surgery or clinic (or an average of 135/85mmHg if it was taken at home)
  - if you're over the age of 80, high blood pressure is considered to be from 150/90mmHg or more if your reading was taken at a pharmacy, GP surgery or clinic (or an average of 145/85mmHg if it was taken at home)
  - ideal blood pressure is usually considered to be between 90/60mmHg and 120/80mmHg, while the target for people over the age of 80 years old is below 150/90mmHg (or 145/85mmHg if it was taken at home)

Blood pressure readings from 121/81mmHg to 139/89mmHg could mean you're at risk of developing high blood pressure if you do not take steps to keep your blood pressure under control.

- Things that can increase your risk of getting high blood pressure
  - It's not always clear what causes high blood pressure, but there are things that can increase your risk.

You might be more at risk if you:

- are overweight
- eat too much salt and do not eat enough fruit and vegetables
- do not do enough exercise
- drink too much alcohol or coffee (or other caffeine-based drinks)
- smoke
- have a lot of stress
- are over 65 year old
- have a relative with high blood pressure
- are of black African or Black Caribbean descent
- live in a deprived area

High blood pressure is also sometimes caused by an underlying health condition or taking a certain medicine.

## 11. Migraine

A migraine usually feels like a very bad headache with a throbbing pain on 1 side.

### ➤ Check if it's a migraine

A migraine tends to be a very bad headache with a throbbing pain on 1 side of the head. You may get other symptoms just before a migraine, such as:

- feeling very tired and yawning a lot
- craving certain foods or feeling thirsty
- changes in your mood
- a stiff neck
- peeing more

You may also get warning signs you're about to have a migraine (called an aura), such as:

- problems with your sight, such as seeing zigzag lines or flashing lights
- numbness or a tingling that feels like pins and needles
- feeling dizzy
- difficulty speaking

Aura symptoms should not last for longer than an hour.

### ➤ See a GP if:

- your migraines are severe or getting worse, or lasting longer than usual
- you have migraines more than once a week
- you're finding it difficult to control your migraines

### ➤ Urgent advice: Ask for an urgent GP appointment or get help from NHS 111 if:

You have a migraine and:

- it's lasted longer than 72 hours
- aura symptoms last longer than an hour at a time
- you're pregnant or just had a baby

### ➤ Immediate action required: Call 999 if you or your child:

- have a headache that came on suddenly and is extremely painful
- have problems speaking or remembering things
- lose your vision or have blurred or double vision
- feel drowsy or confused
- have a seizure or fit
- have a very high temperature and symptoms of meningitis
- cannot move or have weakness in the arms or legs on 1 side of your body, or 1 side of your face

## 12. Cervical Spondylosis

Cervical spondylosis is a common condition that can cause neck and shoulder pain, often in people over 40. A GP should check more serious cases affecting the spine.

➤ Check if it's cervical spondylosis

Symptoms of cervical spondylosis include:

- neck and shoulder pain or stiffness that can come and go
- headaches that often start at the back of the neck

Cervical spondylosis is a normal part of ageing and many people do not have any symptoms.

➤ Ask for an urgent GP appointment or get help from NHS 111 if you have:

- pain that's getting much worse
- heaviness or weakness in your arms or legs
- pins and needles in an arm, as well as pain in your neck or arm
- neck pain that is worse when you move
- pain between your shoulder blades
- a stiff neck
- poor balance

➤ Immediate action required: Call 999 if you have any of these:

- new problems walking
- loss of bladder or bowel control
- sudden lack of co-ordination – for example, with tasks like buttoning a shirt
- somebody's face droops on 1 side (the mouth or eye may have drooped)
- a person cannot lift up both arms and keep them there
- a person has difficulty speaking (speech may be slurred or garbled)

These can be signs of a medical emergency.

### 13. Urinary Tract Infection

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) affect your urinary tract, including your bladder (cystitis), urethra (urethritis) or kidneys (kidney infection).

➤ Check if it's a urinary tract infection (UTI)

Symptoms of a urinary tract infection (UTI) may include:

- pain or a burning sensation when peeing (dysuria)
- needing to pee more often than usual
- needing to pee more often than usual during the night (nocturia)
- needing to pee suddenly or more urgently than usual
- pee that looks cloudy
- blood in your pee
- lower tummy pain or pain in your back, just under the ribs
- a high temperature, or feeling hot and shivery
- a very low temperature below 36C

Your pee may also be dark or smell. If this is your only symptom, it might be because you've not been drinking enough water.

➤ Children

Children with UTIs may also:

- have a high temperature – your child is feeling hotter than usual if you touch their neck, back or tummy
- appear generally unwell – babies and young children may be irritable and not feed or eat properly
- wet the bed or wet themselves
- be sick

➤ Older, frail people or people with a urinary catheter

In older, frail people who have problems with memory, learning and concentration (such as dementia), and people with a urinary catheter, symptoms of a UTI may also include:

- changes in behavior, such as acting agitated or confused (delirium)
- wetting themselves (incontinence) that is worse than usual
- new shivering or shaking (rigors)

➤ Non-urgent advice: See a GP if:

- you have symptoms of a urinary tract infection (UTI) for the first time
- your child has symptoms of a UTI
- you're a man with symptoms of a UTI
- you're pregnant and have symptoms of a UTI

- you're caring for an older, frail person who may have symptoms of a UTI
- you have symptoms of a UTI after surgery
- your symptoms get worse or do not improve within 2 days
- your symptoms come back after treatment

➤ Urgent advice: Ask for an urgent GP appointment or get help from NHS 111 if:  
You think you, your child or someone you care for may have a urinary tract infection (UTI) and:

- have a very high temperature, or feel hot and shivery
- have a very low temperature below 36C
- are confused or drowsy
- have pain in the lower tummy or in the back, just under the ribs
- can see blood in your pee

These symptoms could mean you have a kidney infection, which can be serious if it's not treated as it could cause sepsis.

## 14. Allergy

An allergy is where your body reacts to something that's normally harmless like pollen, dust or animal fur. The symptoms can be mild, but for some people they can be very serious.

➤ Check if it's an allergy

Symptoms of an allergic reaction can include:

- a runny nose or sneezing
- pain or tenderness around your cheeks, eyes or forehead
- coughing, wheezing or breathlessness
- itchy skin or a raised rash (hives)
- diarrhea
- feeling or being sick
- swollen eyes, lips, mouth or throat

➤ Immediate action required: Call 999 if:

- your lips, mouth, throat or tongue suddenly become swollen
- you're breathing very fast or struggling to breathe (you may become very wheezy or feel like you're choking or gasping for air)
- your throat feels tight or you're struggling to swallow
- your skin, tongue or lips turn blue, grey or pale (if you have black or brown skin, this may be easier to see on the palms of your hands or soles of your feet)
- you suddenly become very confused, drowsy or dizzy
- someone faints and cannot be woken up
- a child is limp, floppy or not responding like they normally do (their head may fall to the side, backwards or forwards, or they may find it difficult to lift their head or focus on your face)

You or the person who's unwell may also have a rash that's swollen, raised or itchy. These can be signs of a serious allergic reaction and may need immediate treatment in hospital.

➤ See a GP if:

- you think you or your child may have an allergy

## 15. GERD

Heartburn is a burning feeling in the chest caused by stomach acid travelling up towards the throat (acid reflux). If it keeps happening, it may be called gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

➤ Check if you have GER

The main symptoms of GERD are:

- heartburn – a burning sensation in the middle of your chest
- an unpleasant sour taste in your mouth, caused by stomach acid

You may also have:

- a cough or hiccups that keep coming back
- a hoarse voice
- bad breath
- bloating and feeling sick

Symptoms are often worse after eating, when lying down and when bending over.

➤ See a GP if:

- lifestyle changes and pharmacy medicines are not helping your heartburn
- you have heartburn most days
- you also have other symptoms, like food getting stuck in your throat, frequently being sick, or losing weight for no reason



## 16. Peptic Ulcer Disease

Stomach ulcers, also known as gastric ulcers, are sores that develop on the lining of the stomach. You can also get ulcers in part of the intestine just beyond the stomach, which are called duodenal ulcers.

### ➤ Signs and symptoms

The most common symptom of a stomach ulcer is a burning or gnawing pain in the center of the tummy (abdomen). But stomach ulcers aren't always painful and some people may experience other symptoms, such as indigestion, heartburn and acid reflux and feeling sick.

### ➤ When to seek medical advice

You should visit your GP if you think you may have a stomach ulcer. Contact your GP or NHS 111 immediately if:

- you are passing dark, sticky, tar-like stools
- you have a sudden, sharp pain in your tummy that gets steadily worse

Go to your nearest accident and emergency (A&E) department or call 999 if:

- you are vomiting blood – the blood can appear bright red or have a dark brown, grainy appearance, similar to coffee grounds

These could be a sign of a serious complication, such as internal bleeding.

## 17. Diabetes

Diabetes is a condition that causes a person's blood sugar level to become too high.

### ➤ When to see a GP

Visit your GP as soon as possible if you experience the main symptoms of diabetes, which include:

- feeling very thirsty
- peeing more frequently than usual, particularly at night
- feeling very tired
- weight loss and loss of muscle bulk
- itching around the penis or vagina, or frequent episodes of thrush
- blurred vision

Type 1 diabetes can develop quickly over weeks or even days.

Weight loss is common in people with type 1 diabetes when it first develops and before it's treated, but it's less common in people with type 2 diabetes.

### ➤ Diabetic eye screening

If you have diabetes, your eyes are at risk from diabetic retinopathy, a condition that can lead to sight loss if it's not treated.

It's important to see a doctor if you notice any problems with your eyesight.

### ➤ Diabetic foot problems

Diabetes can damage the nerves in your feet and cause a loss of feeling. It can also reduce the blood supply to your feet. This means you may not notice if your foot is sore or injured, and foot injuries do not heal as well. This can lead to ulcers and infections, and sometimes amputations can be needed in serious cases.

It's important to see a healthcare professional as soon as possible if you notice any problems with your feet.