



The right information

Knowing about your long term condition can really help you. Once you have an understanding of your condition and its treatment, you'll feel more confident and be more able to take care of yourself on a daily basis.

Did you know?

The Your Health Your Way website (www.nhs.uk/YourHealth) gives advice on self care support including guidance on medicines, how to make an information prescription and how to get the most from your GP or pharmacist. NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) provides information on your condition in a variety of formats and a round-up of the best internet health sites.

You don't have to use the internet, there are lots of other ways to get information. See the back page for more suggestions.

Talking to others about your condition

It's vital to get the emotional and practical support you need when you have a long term health condition. Local support groups, helplines, friends and family, patient organisations, faith groups, or even your employer can help. Sometimes sharing your experience with people in similar positions can make you feel better.

Just ask your GP, nurse or healthcare professional where you can meet people like you.

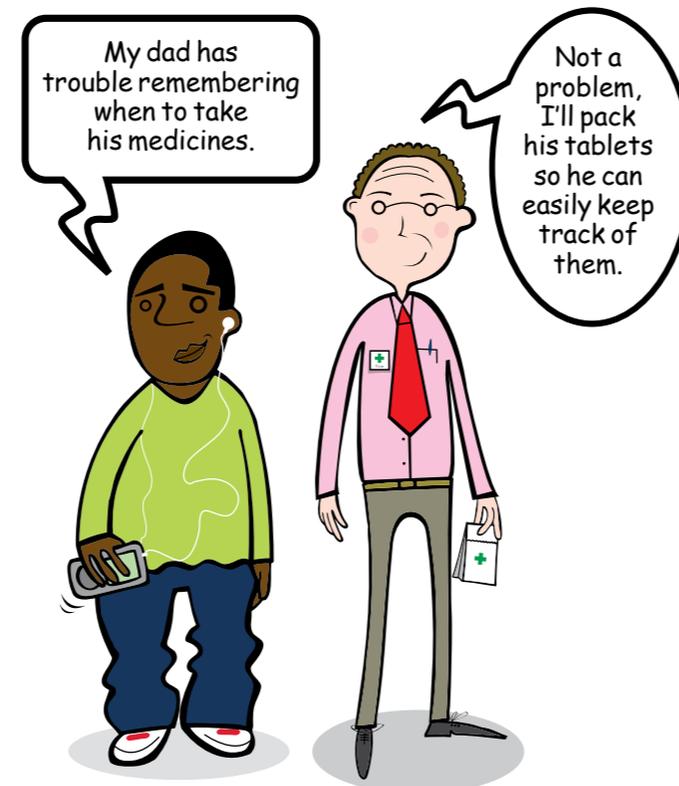
Support for carers

Caring for someone with a long term condition can be physically and emotionally demanding.

Did you know?

There is lots of help available for carers, including the right to a carer's assessment by social services, to determine the level of support you need.

Just ask your GP, nurse or social worker or go to Carers UK www.carersuk.org You can get to Carers UK via NHS Choices too.



More information?

This leaflet will help you start exploring the self care choices that are right for you. To find out more about the support available, visit www.nhs.uk/YourHealth

For other information on how to access NHS services call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47. Carers can contact Carers UK via CarersLine on 0808 808 7777 or online at www.carersuk.org for support.

Check your local NHS guide to Local Services for details of self care support services. *Just ask* your GP, nurse or pharmacist where you can get a copy.

Many local libraries have specially trained staff to help you find information about your local health service and show you the information on the NHS website.

For tips about how to get the best out of a discussion with your GP, nurse or pharmacist go to: www.nhs.uk/YourHealth/Pages/GettingreadyforGPappointment.aspx

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Whether you're a patient, a relative or a carer, PALS can answer questions and resolve concerns. Call NHS Direct to find out where your local PALS is. Whatever your issue – *just ask*.

www.nhs.uk
0845 46 47

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Help and advice for living life well with a long term condition



Your health,
your way,
your choice.

Living life well with a long term condition

If you or someone you know is living with a long term condition, you'll know that sometimes life's not easy. Being in control means greater confidence and better health and wellbeing. A long term condition can be anything from asthma to multiple sclerosis. This leaflet contains information and advice about the support available.

Self care

Self care means looking after yourself and your general health – so you can manage your life and not just your condition. For example taking medicines properly, doing exercise or seeing friends. You don't have to do this alone, there is lots of support available to help you make choices which suit you.

Have you got a care plan?

Your GP, nurse or social worker will support you by helping you develop your own personalised care plan. This is a record of your discussion about the support and services you need to help you live with your condition. By talking about or reviewing your care plan, you decide together what care and support you need and how it will be provided.

Everyone with a long term condition can have a care plan – *just ask*.

Healthy lifestyle choices

If you've been thinking about making changes to your lifestyle, such as stopping smoking, losing weight, eating healthily or doing more exercise, there's plenty of help and support available. Keeping fit and healthy can be a challenge if you have a long term condition, but small changes can make a big difference to your wellbeing.

Did you know?

Your GP or other healthcare workers, including pharmacists, can help. *Just ask* any of the healthcare professionals involved in your care about what steps you can take to improve your health. They'll be able to suggest lifestyle changes that are suitable for your condition and any treatment you're having. They will also be able to tell you about local services and organisations that can help.



The right equipment and techniques

The right equipment can help you live independently and stay healthy.

Did you know?

The NHS can provide equipment like wheelchairs and walking sticks to help you move around your home more easily. There are also devices like blood pressure monitors to use at home, which can help you manage your health on a daily basis.

It's also possible to get help to adapt your home to make life easier, everything from installing a downstairs bathroom to technologies which let people know if you need assistance. Sometimes, simple techniques or learning new ways to do things can be very effective.

Just ask your GP, nurse, pharmacist or social services what support there is to help you stay independent.

Learning to live with your condition

There is lots of support available to give you the skills you need to be more in control of your health and your condition, which in turn can boost your self confidence.

Did you know?

There are courses which can help you become more independent over time, eat well and deal with pain and tiredness. They can show you how to cope with stress and how to prepare for an appointment.

Some are for people with a specific condition, such as diabetes, others are more general self-management courses for anyone with a long term condition. They'll help you understand your condition and how to live with it. There are also courses for carers too.

Just ask your GP, nurse or healthcare professional what's available locally to help you learn about living with your condition.

