

# INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS IN LOTHIAN

The way that we access **urgent care** has changed to keep everyone safe and well and to protect vulnerable patients. There are now more ways for you to get help and advice more quickly and closer to home. Please help us, help you, by getting the right care in the right place. This guide provides information about the range of health care services across NHS Lothian and how and when to use them.



Information can also be accessed by visiting:  
[services.nhslothian.scot/rightcare](https://services.nhslothian.scot/rightcare)

**Right Care  
Right Place**

## Navigating the system: how to access healthcare services in Lothian

As a result of the pandemic, it is important we continue to manage services carefully and avoid overcrowding in hospitals, clinics, GP surgeries and other healthcare settings.

Our Emergency Departments (ED) are for critical emergencies and can be very busy, with long waiting times particularly at weekends and evenings. Please think carefully before attending ED with conditions that could be served better by another health care service.

Many conditions and minor injuries can now be assessed quickly, safely and conveniently by a video or phone consultation with a qualified healthcare professional or by your local pharmacy.

You should always dial 999 or attend your closest ED in a critical emergency. If you attend ED with a condition that is not a critical emergency, you will be signposted to a more appropriate health care service.

If you need urgent care for an illness or injury that requires immediate attention, but it is not a critical emergency, you should **call 111** first.

Please use this guide to find the right care in the right place and avoid unnecessary delays. Information can also be accessed by visiting **[services.nhsllothian.scot/rightcare](https://services.nhsllothian.scot/rightcare)**

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## Emergency Department (Accident and Emergency)



Your local Emergency Department (ED) is open 24/7 for critical emergencies, such as severe injury, a suspected heart attack or stroke, severe breathing difficulties or severe bleeding. In a critical emergency you should always **call 999** or go directly to your closest ED located at:

- **Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh** at Little France, Edinburgh
- **St John's Hospital**, Livingston
- **Royal Hospital for Children and Young People** at Little France in Edinburgh.

ED is not an appropriate destination if you have a minor injury, minor illness or are looking for a second opinion on an existing condition.

If you think you need to attend ED, but it is not a critical emergency, please call **NHS 24 free on 111 anytime day or night**. They can refer you to the right care service.

**Please scan the QR code below for more information.**



[services.nhsllothian.scot/rightcare/emergency-departments](https://services.nhsllothian.scot/rightcare/emergency-departments)

## NHS 24 on 111 / Minor Injuries



You should call **NHS 24 free on 111** anytime day or night if you:

- think you need to go to ED but it's not a critical emergency
- have a recent minor injury including minor cuts, burns, sprains or insect bites
- are too ill to wait for your GP or dentist to open
- need urgent mental health advice and guidance.

They will assess and advise you on next steps. If it is appropriate, you might be scheduled a telephone or video consultation with a qualified healthcare professional to assess your condition or minor injury. Or it might be possible for you to treat a minor injury safely at home, or with the help of a pharmacist.

If you need to attend hospital or a minor injuries unit you will be scheduled a time to attend.

**NHS 24 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

**Please scan the QR code below for more information.**



[services.nhsllothian.scot/rightcare/minor-injuries-unit](https://services.nhsllothian.scot/rightcare/minor-injuries-unit)

## GP Out-of-Hours Service



If you attend the Emergency Department (ED) with a condition that can be managed by your own GP, you will be signposted to see them during working hours.

If you need urgent medical advice, which can't wait until your GP practice is open, or you have a sudden onset or worsening of conditions, call **NHS 24 on 111**. If suitable, they can refer you to the GP out-of-hours service for an assessment. You will either be:

- given advice over the phone
- allocated an appointment to attend an out-of-hours centre
- visited in your own home if you are frail or elderly

You must phone **NHS 24 on 111** to arrange an assessment, there are no walk-in centres.

All routine health matters, including repeat prescriptions must be dealt with by your own GP practice. Contact them during normal opening hours and check if they have an online repeat prescription service.

**Please scan the QR code below for more information.**



[services.nhsllothian.scot/rightcare/  
gp-out-of-hours-service](https://services.nhsllothian.scot/rightcare/gp-out-of-hours-service)

## Contact Your General Practice



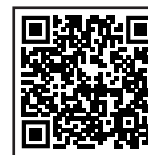
GP practices are open for routine and urgent care.

Following the pandemic there are now more ways for you to access care, including phone and video appointments. Anyone who needs to be seen in person will be given a face-to-face appointment.

Many practices also have different professionals including doctors, nurses, health visitors and sometimes pharmacists and physiotherapists. When you call your GP practice you will be asked a few questions in strict confidence to be directed to the most appropriate professional.

If your GP practice is closed and you cannot wait until they open, phone **NHS 24 on 111**.

**Please scan the QR code below for more information.**



[services.nhsllothian.scot/GPs](https://services.nhsllothian.scot/GPs)

## NHS Pharmacy First Scotland



If you have a minor illness a community pharmacy should be your first stop. They can help with:

- Advice and treatment for minor illnesses through Pharmacy First Scotland such as cold sores, earache, indigestion or constipation
- Accessing free emergency contraception
- Managing your repeat prescriptions.

Pharmacy teams are experts in medicines and can provide help and advice quickly without an appointment. If needed, they can refer you onto other healthcare teams.

Many pharmacists offer confidential consultations and, if appropriate, can prescribe medicine for impetigo, shingles, skin infections and urinary infections.

NHS Pharmacy First Scotland is available from all pharmacies in Scotland that dispense NHS prescriptions to anyone registered with a Scottish GP.

**Please scan the QR code below for more information.**



[services.nhslothian.scot/Pharmacies](https://services.nhslothian.scot/Pharmacies)

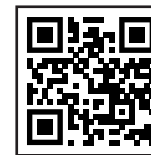


**NHSinform.scot** is Scotland's national health information website. It is a one-stop-shop for your health and care needs with clear, factual and clinically authoritative information.

You can visit NHS Inform for self-help advice and guidance to treat common symptoms including fever, pain management and flu-like illness. There are also a range of mental health self-help guides.

NHSinform.scot also has a directory of local health services that can provide further medical advice if needed.

**Please scan the QR code below for more information.**



[nhsinform.scot](https://nhsinform.scot)

## Emergency Dental Care



If you attend the Emergency Department with a dental problem, they will ensure you do not have a critical emergency and then signpost you to see your own dentist or call NHS 24 on 111. Doctors are not trained to perform dental procedures.

If you have an urgent dental problem and you are registered with a dentist, you should call your practice during opening hours. If your dentist is closed, and it can't wait until they reopen, or if you are not registered with a dentist, you should call NHS 24 on 111 for help and advice.

Dental emergencies include, but are not limited to:

- toothache or mouth pain
- abscesses and swellings in and around the mouth
- bleeding and/or trauma
- non-healing ulcers that have no obvious cause and last for several weeks.

For more information about what to do in a dental emergency you can also call the NHS Lothian advice line on 0131 536 4800.

**Please scan the QR code below for more information.**



[services.nhsllothian.scot/dentists](https://services.nhsllothian.scot/dentists)

## What to do if You Have an Eye Problem



Please contact an optometrist in the first instance for all eye conditions.

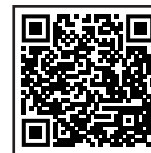
Optometrists across Lothian will offer you a triage phone consultation to assess the urgency of your condition and arrange an appointment accordingly.

If you have an urgent eye problem out of hours you should phone NHS 24 on 111 anytime day or night.

You can find more information about eye care at:

- [nhsinform.scot/tests-and-treatments/eyecare](https://nhsinform.scot/tests-and-treatments/eyecare)
- [Eyes.Scot](https://eyes.scot)

**Please scan the QR code below for more information.**



[services.nhsllothian.scot/Opticians](https://services.nhsllothian.scot/Opticians)

## Emergency Contraception



You can get information and advice about emergency contraception by phoning **NHS 24 on 111** or visiting **NHS Inform** online.

Your local pharmacist may also be able to help. Most pharmacies in Lothian will supply the emergency contraceptive pill free of charge to anyone aged 13 and over who is registered with a GP in Scotland.

Lothian Sexual Health Clinics can also provide advice and treatment. An appointment can be made by calling 0131 536 1070 Monday to Friday between 9am and 3pm. You can also request a call back appointment online at **[lothiansexualhealth.scot/contraception/emergency-contraception](https://lothiansexualhealth.scot/contraception/emergency-contraception)**

**Please scan the QR code below for more information.**



**[lothiansexualhealth.scot/contraception/emergency-contraception](https://lothiansexualhealth.scot/contraception/emergency-contraception)**

## Physiotherapy (Musculoskeletal) Service



Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy services are available to adults within Lothian. There are a number of clinics across the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian that provide assessment and treatment through a combination of either face to face, telephone or video consultation depending on your needs.

**For further information on physiotherapy services available, how to access these and for self-help advice please scan the QR code below.**



**[services.nhslothian.scot/Physiotherapy](https://services.nhslothian.scot/Physiotherapy)**

## Maternity Care



Maternity services provide high quality care throughout your pregnancy. Your midwife will ensure you have telephone numbers to contact for care.

If you need to contact the Early Pregnancy Unit please call:

- St John's Hospital on 01506 524 112 if you live in West Lothian
- Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Pregnancy Support Centre on 0131 242 2425/2438 if you live elsewhere in Lothian

**For further advice please scan the QR codes below.**



[NHSinform.scot/ready-steady-baby](https://www.nhs.uk/infomanagement/ready-steady-baby)

Your guide to pregnancy, labour and birth and early parenthood up to 8 weeks.

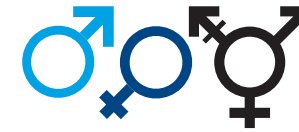


[Parentclub.scot](https://www.parentclub.scot/)



[services.nhsllothian.scot/Maternity](https://services.nhsllothian.scot/Maternity)

## Sexual Health



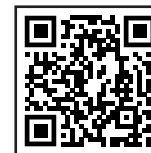
An appointment for a sexual health clinic can be made online via [lothiansexualhealth.scot](https://lothiansexualhealth.scot) or by phoning 0131 536 1070.

If you cannot wait until the next available appointment, for example, if you think you have been exposed to HIV in the last few hours, you have been sexually assaulted, or you are HIV positive and feel seriously unwell you should contact **NHS 24 on 111**.

If you have been the victim of a sexual assault, you can self-refer to the Sexual Assault Response Co-ordination Service (SARCS). You do not need to be referred by a GP or other healthcare professional. Call SARCS free on 0800 148 88 88 or visit [nhsinform.scot/turn-to-sarcs](https://www.nhs.uk/infomanagement/turn-to-sarcs)

SARCS is available in each health board to address people's immediate healthcare needs. If appropriate, the service may be able to arrange for you to access a forensic medical examination (FME), without making a report to the police.

**Please scan the QR code below for more information.**



[lothiansexualhealth.scot](https://lothiansexualhealth.scot)



## Mental Health



If you, or someone you know, needs urgent mental health support phone **NHS 24 on 111** anytime day or night and select the Mental Health option to access mental health advice and guidance.

There are a range of online and telephone mental health and wellbeing services that provide free support on a range of conditions such as stress, anxiety, depression and feelings of panic.

If you are feeling low, anxious or depressed, you can call Breathing Space free on 0800 83 85 87. Trained advisors are available to listen, understand and offer information and advice. This service is open Monday to Thursday between 6pm and 2am and 24 hours from Friday to Monday 6am.

**You can also call the Samaritans 24 hours a day 365 days a year on 116 123.**

More information, practical advice, self-help guides, and ideas on looking after your mental wellbeing are available online at:

- [wellbeinglothian.scot](http://wellbeinglothian.scot)
- [clearyourhead.scot](http://clearyourhead.scot)
- [breathingspace.scot](http://breathingspace.scot)
- [NHSinform.scot/mentalhealth](http://NHSinform.scot/mentalhealth)

We have also developed a dedicated wellbeing hub for children and young people online at:

- [children.nhslothian.scot/children/wellbeing-hub/](http://children.nhslothian.scot/children/wellbeing-hub/) (5-11 year olds)
- [children.nhslothian.scot/young-people/wellbeing-hub/](http://children.nhslothian.scot/young-people/wellbeing-hub/) (12-17 year olds)



**Please scan this QR code for more information.**

[services.nhslothian.scot/rightcare/mental-health](http://services.nhslothian.scot/rightcare/mental-health)

## Accessibility

NHS Lothian is committed to ensuring that everyone can access our services effectively and efficiently. Communication support is available for patients to allow healthcare staff to provide good, patient-focused care. This includes people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, Blind or Deafblind and for people who require translation from English.

NHS Lothian provides a range of communication support including:

- written translations and alternative formats
- specialist staff
- face-to-face interpreters (including British Sign Language and deaf blind communicators) and telephone interpreters.

You can also use the free interpretation service Language Line to access **NHS 24 services: [nhs24.scot/get-in-touch/language-line](http://nhs24.scot/get-in-touch/language-line)**

**Please scan the QR code below for more information.**



[nhslothian.scot/YourRights/TICS](http://nhslothian.scot/YourRights/TICS)

## Textphone

If you use a textphone you can contact **NHS 24 on 18001 111**

**You can also contact NHS 24 with the Relay UK app.  
Please scan the QR code below.**



[relayuk.bt.com](https://relayuk.bt.com)

## British Sign Language (BSL)

If you are Deaf but want to use the phone service, you can use the ContactSCOTLAND-BSL interpreting video relay service. **Please visit [contactscotland-bsl.org](https://contactscotland-bsl.org) or scan the QR code below.**



## Feedback

NHS Lothian is committed to improving services for patients and their families. We understand that when people come to the Emergency Department (ED) they can be very worried, and in pain or discomfort, and we want to make sure you get the right care, in the right place, at the right time. This is why you may be signposted to another more appropriate care service.

We are keen to hear about your experience of our services. If you want to tell us about this, you can do this:

- in writing
- by telephoning the Patient Experience Team: 0131 536 3370 (9am - 2pm)
- by email: [feedback@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)
- face to face discussion with the NHS Lothian team looking after you or your patient's care.

It is helpful if you can provide as much detail as possible including your address, email or telephone number so that we can get in touch with you if we need further information.

You can find out more about the patient experience process online.

**Please scan the QR code below.**



[nhslothian.scot/yourrights/  
complimentsconcernscomplaints](https://nhslothian.scot/yourrights/complimentsconcernscomplaints)

# Notes

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