



Royal College of
General Practitioners

Supporting Self Care for Minor Ailments

*An e-learning course to help patients
develop their ability to self care*

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Supporting Self Care for Minor Ailments

Why do People Consult with Minor Ailments?

Lesson menu

- Overview
- Definitions and Rationale
- The Health Care Pyramid
- Health Seeking Behaviour
- Check Your Knowledge
- Defining Minor Ailments
- Promoting Self-Care
- Check Your Knowledge
- Reasons for Consultation
- Reflection Points
- Addressing Attendance Reasons
- Supporting Self-Care
- Consultation
- Reflection Points
- Key Points
- End of Lesson

Overview

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Est. Time: 30 minutes ⌚

Author: [Fiona Baskett](#), [Clare Etherington](#)

Curriculum: 1. Being a GP. 2. The General Practice Consultation


Description

This lesson promotes reflection on the reasons why patients attend with minor ailments. It examines the context within which patients present and explores the ideas, concerns and expectations of patients with minor ailments who can be encouraged and supported to self-care.

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Define a minor ailment
- Describe health seeking behaviour and changes in the lay understanding of minor ailments
- Identify the reasons for attendance by exploring the patient's ideas, concerns and expectations
- Describe the importance of the context within which the patient presents and understand the social factors that influence the patient's ability to self care
- Develop strategies to encourage patients to self-care and build confidence for GPs to conduct a 'self-care aware' consultation



- Develop your self care consultation skills
- Improve patient confidence and autonomy
- Reduce unnecessary consultations and patient anxiety

In partnership with the
Self Care Forum
and **NHS North West**

2. Why do People Consult with Minor Ailments?

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- **The Health Care Pyramid**
- Health Seeking Behaviour
- Your Previous Experiences
- Defining Minor Ailments
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The Health Care Pyramid

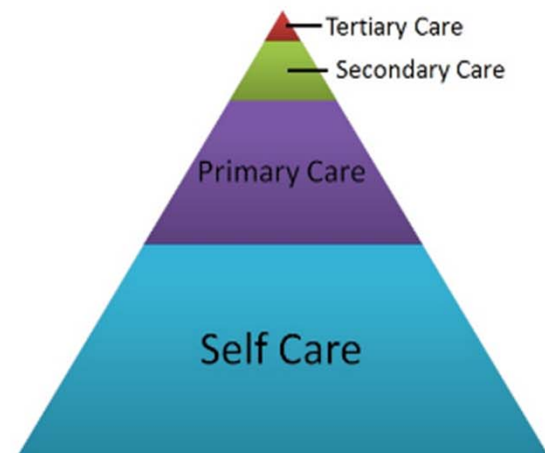
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In the UK, over 50 million consultations each year are recorded for minor ailments alone. A reduction in this number would benefit patients by improving access to GP care for higher risk patients and increase time and staff resources for managing long term conditions (Smith, 2004).

Encouraging and supporting self-care offers additional benefits for patients, including:

- Increased confidence and empowerment
- Reduced doctor dependency
- Less time off work
- Reduced anxiety while waiting for an appointment



Around 80% of all 'care episodes' are self-care

Smith,P., 2004. 40th Annual Meeting. Self-care in an enlarged Europe: More benefits for more people AESGP (Association of the European Self-Medication Industry) Madrid, Spain 2-4 June 2004



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Reasons for Consultation

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Common Minor Ailments

Reasons for Consultation

Click next to continue

Patients consult with minor ailments for many different reasons including:

- seeking a diagnosis
- for advice or treatment
- or simply for reassurance

Addressing the reason for attendance is crucial to encouraging and enabling future self-care (Pringle, 2009). Let's go through some case studies to explore these different reasons for attendance. This includes social



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Consultation

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Reasons for attendance

Let's go through the case study before you view the consultation video.

Mr H is a 51-year-old self-employed painter and decorator. He has an adult son from his first marriage and lives with his second wife and their two children, aged 5 and 7 years. Thirty years ago he had a right knee arthroscopy following a football injury. He is usually healthy and takes no prescription medication.

Mr H is a lifelong non-smoker, drinks 10 units of alcohol per week and has a BMI of 29. Five days ago he missed his footing on the bottom step of a ladder and since then has complained of lower back pain. You ask him about red flags for back pain but do not identify any. You wonder why he has come to see you...

Now, click the video on the right to play the clip, then answer the question on the following page.



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