

News release

Friday November 4, 2011
For immediate release

Ask your local pharmacist

Pharmacists should be the first port of call for advice on coughs, colds and contraception this winter.

Health officials from the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster are encouraging patients to use their community pharmacy for treatment or advice on a range of common conditions. For many minor medical problems you can get help from a pharmacist instead of visiting your GP and you don't need an appointment.

The message coincides with the National Pharmacy Association's Ask Your Pharmacist Week which runs from 7-13 November.

Pharmacist Unnat Patel, from Medicine Box, in Evington Road, Leicester, said: "Pharmacists across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland provide a wide range of services to patients. This includes reviewing medication, helping patients to stop smoking, offering the flu vaccine and providing sexual health information.

"Your pharmacist can check your symptoms and assess the need for over-the-counter medication. We aim to help you there and then but if necessary we can also direct you to your GP or another health professional."

Lesley Harrison, associate director of primary care, speaking on behalf of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster, said: "Ask Your Pharmacist Week is about reminding patients that instead of waiting to see a GP to diagnose common conditions like colds, sore throats or diarrhoea, you can go straight to your local pharmacist for help.

"Patients often think they have to see a doctor, but health officials from the Cluster are hoping people will realise there is often another, more direct route for treatment."

For further information visit www.askyourpharmacist.co.uk To find your nearest pharmacy please contact the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster customer services team on 0116 295 7011.

ENDS

For interviews or more information please contact media officer Liz Thomas on 0116 295 7677 or liz.thomas@leicester.nhs.uk or senior media officer Caroline Higgs on 0116 295 7663 or caroline.higgs@lcr.nhs.uk.

Notes to editor:

In October 2010 NHS Leicester City and NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland joined forces to form a 'cluster', in line with the requirements of the Department of Health. Although we share one Cluster Board and our staff work across the city and county boundaries, we have not legally merged, and retain our separate statutory duties. Together we serve a population of more than a million people. Cluster formation is an interim stage in the reform of the NHS, involving on-going transfer of most local commissioning functions to GP-led clinical commissioning groups, in line with the Health and Social Care Bill, now before Parliament and the House of Lords.