

Starting university is exciting but juggling new routines alongside health concerns is a big adjustment. One of the first steps to settling at uni is sorting out your healthcare — specifically, **registering with a GP during Freshers week**. Miss this, and you might find yourself stuck waiting or unsure how to get meds when you need them.

Don't panic! This guide breaks down everything from **why campus GP practices matter**, to how to smartly use local pharmacies, and even how to save money on prescriptions with NHS discounts and prepayment certificates.

Why Register with a GP During Freshers Week?

Freshers week is more than just parties and introductions — it's your golden window to register with a campus GP or nearby NHS surgery. Registering early means:

- You can access medical care close to your university accommodation
- You avoid delays in getting an appointment when you're sick
- Your repeat prescriptions can be managed seamlessly—important for ongoing medication
- It's easier to attend clinics or vaccinations offered on or near campus

Health services get busy, especially during the first term when many students register at once. So don't leave your GP registration till week seven or later — by then you'll likely face longer wait times.

Step-by-Step: How to Register with a GP Near Campus

It's easier than it sounds! Here's a quick checklist:

1. **Find Your Local GP Surgery or Campus Practice:** Most universities share lists of NHS surgeries close to campus. Search "campus GP practice" plus your city name or check your university's student portal.
2. **Check Registration Requirements:** Most practices want proof of address (like your hall contract or tenancy agreement), photo ID, and a completed GMS1 form (available online or at the practice).
3. **Register In Person or Online:** Many surgeries allow online registration through their websites or the NHS website. However, some still require you to drop in, particularly campus-based practices during Freshers.
4. **Follow Up:** Once registered, you might get a welcome letter or an appointment for a new patient health check. Keep an eye on your emails or post.

Tip: Use social media tools like the university's Facebook or Twitter pages to ask current students about their experiences and tips on GP registration in your area. These channels sometimes share up-to-date advice on any registration delays and how to navigate them.

Using Pharmacy-First Care for Quick Help

Still figuring out your GP details or the surgery is fully booked? Your local pharmacy is your friend.



Pharmacy-first services can help manage common conditions like colds, tummy bugs, mild infections, and minor injuries without a GP appointment. Pharmacists offer advice, recommend over-the-counter meds, or refer you to hospitals or GPs if needed.



- Example conditions pharmacy-first services cover include:
 - Hay fever
 - Minor skin problems like rashes
 - Travel health advice
 - Earache and sore throats

Always remember to mention you're a student when seeking pharmacy advice — some campus pharmacies have special NHS schemes aimed at helping students avoid unnecessary GP visits.

Prescription Charges, Exemptions, and Avoiding Overpaying

Prescription charges in England currently stand at £9.35 per item (as of 2024). For many students on a budget, repeating this cost for multiple meds or monthly refills can quickly add up.

Here's how to not overpay:

- **Know if You're Exempt:** Some students qualify for free prescriptions based on health conditions like diabetes, epilepsy, or pregnancy. See the NHS website for the full list.
- **Consider the NHS Low Income Scheme:** If you have limited income, you might qualify for help with health costs, including prescriptions. This is done through a HC1 form which you submit to the NHS.
- **Use a Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC):** If you take multiple meds, a PPC can save you money. For example, a 3-month PPC costs about £30.25 but lets you pay a fixed amount no matter how many prescriptions you get.

Prescription Charges and Prepayment Certificates Math

Number of Items	Total Cost Without PPC (£)	Cost with 3-month PPC (£30.25)	Cost with 12-month PPC (£108.10)
Best Option 1-3 items	9.35 - 28.05	30.25	108.10
Pay per item 4-10 items	37.40 - 93.50	30.25	108.10
3-month PPC >10 items	>93.50	30.25	108.10

3-month or 12-month PPC depending on length of treatment

Check your NHS prescription history or talk to your pharmacy to decide the best option for you.

Managing Repeat Prescriptions Between Home and Uni

Another common snag for new students is organizing repeat prescriptions if you move between home and term-time addresses. Here are the key tips:

[change gp when moving](#)

1. **Tell Your GP About Your Student Status:** Many GPs can support requests for sending prescriptions to different pharmacies according to your location.
2. **Choose a Pharmacy That Services Both Addresses:** Chain pharmacies often let you collect meds in different branches — see if the chain near your home and uni are linked.
3. **Plan Ahead:** Prescription processing can take a few days. Avoid last-minute requests during your first week at uni.

Summary Checklist: GP Registration & Healthcare Survival for Freshers

- ✓ Register with a campus or local GP during Freshers week
- ✓ Keep proof of ID and address handy (uni contract is perfect)
- ✓ Use your uni's Facebook and Twitter pages for real-time advice on GP services
- ✓ Know when to use pharmacy-first services — they're a quick, free option for common problems
- ✓ Check your eligibility for free prescriptions or consider a Prescription Prepayment Certificate
- ✓ Coordinate repeat prescriptions in advance between your home and term-time pharmacies

Final Thoughts

Registering with a GP early in your student life isn't just about future emergencies — it's about peace of mind, convenience, and managing your health affordably. If you're unsure where to start, ask your university's student

services team or look for student feedback on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Real-life tips from peers can be a lifesaver when policies and procedures feel confusing.

Most importantly, don't wait until you're ill to find out all this stuff. Start your university journey with your health sorted — that way, you can focus on studying, making friends, and, well, enjoying uni life!