

One in six Brits visit their GP or A&E as first port of call for winter snifflesⁱ

***Treat Yourself Better with Pharmacist Advice* launches national selfie competition to encourage people to head to the pharmacy first for winter ailments**

New research reveals that one in six adults (16%) would visit their GP or A&E as a first port of call for winter ailments, where only one in five (21%) would head to their local pharmacyⁱ. Unnecessary visits to the GP and A&E could equate to a surprising £343 million which would be better spent on people who need medical attention.ⁱⁱ

To help tackle this issue and encourage people to speak to a pharmacist first for winter ailments, *Treat Yourself Better with Pharmacist Advice* launches a national competition asking people to take a selfie in a pharmacy and upload it to www.facebook.com/TYBHealth or tweet it to [@TYBHealth](https://twitter.com/TYBHealth) to be in with the chance of winning a spa break for two. Two lucky runners-up will also win a £100 voucher to stock up on pamper treats so people really can treat themselves better this winter.

To qualify for entry, entrants are asked to nominate another person in their post and use #treatyourselfbetter to spread the word that pharmacists can help people get better this winter by providing expert advice and treatment suggestions tailored for individual symptoms. One of the most common reasons people (44%) visit the GP when suffering with a winter ailment is because they want or think they need antibioticsⁱ, however, antibiotics don't have any impact on common winter ailments which are caused by viruses as they only work against bacteria.

A trip to the pharmacy does not require an appointment and on average people report waiting under 5 minutes to speak to a pharmacist compared to a 3 ½ day wait for a GP consultationⁱ. Pharmacies provide a trusted source of health and wellbeing advice for all common winter ailments and are widely available with 96% of the population, even those living in the most deprived areas, living within 20 minutes of a pharmacy by walking or using public transport.

The competition is run on behalf of the [Treat Yourself Better with Pharmacist Advice](http://www.facebook.com/TYBHealth) campaign which encourages people to self-treat cold and flu symptoms. The competition closes on 28th February 2015. Full terms and conditions can be viewed online at www.facebook.com/TYBHealth.

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Notes to editors:

The research carried out to support the *Treat Yourself Better with Pharmacist Advice* campaign also revealed:

- The younger generation is the biggest culprit with nearly one in four (22%) of 18-34 year olds admitting they would visit a GP as a first port of call for winter ailments versus only one in 10 (12%) of those aged over 35ⁱ
- Flu is the biggest cause of concern resulting in one in four (24%) visiting their GP or A&E followed by nasal congestion (20%), a sore throat (13%), cough (13%) or cold (11%) putting increased pressure on already struggling NHS servicesⁱ
- The research also highlighted that people underestimate the normal duration of winter ailments and therefore visit their GP too earlyⁱ. 9 in 10 (98%) expect a cough to last on average for only 8 days when in fact it can last up to three weeks and 8 in 10 (80%) expect flu symptoms to last only 10 days when 2 weeks is the normal durationⁱ
- Only half of adults (55%) believe their GP adequately explains why antibiotics don't work for common winter ailmentsⁱ

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ⁱ Research carried out on behalf of the Treat Yourself Better with Pharmacist Advice campaign by Redshift Research. Sample size: 2,000 UK adults, July 2014.

ⁱⁱ Curtis L. Personal and Social Services Research Unit, Canterbury University. Unit costs of health and social care 2012. Available at: <http://www.pssru.ac.uk/project-pages/unit-costs/2012/>. Accessed August, 2014. N.B. Each GP consultation costs the NHS £43 and an A&E walk-in-service costs £41