

View this article online at: [patient.info/news-and-features/what-health-benefits-do-students-get](https://patient.info/news-and-features/what-health-benefits-do-students-get)

## What student health benefits can I get?

Student life can be pretty demanding, so it makes sense to do everything you can to stay as fit and healthy as possible. Here, we take a look at what student health benefits you can get for free - or almost free - and how to claim them.

### Vaccinations

If you're off to university, you're strongly advised to get the COVID-19 vaccination as well as the [Men ACWY jab](#) to protect you against meningitis. It is available free on the NHS to under-25s.

Also, consider having the annual flu jab, which you're entitled to if you have certain conditions such as asthma. Did you miss either or both doses of the [MMR](#) (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccines during childhood? Now you can get them on the NHS at any age

Ideally, get your jabs before you go to uni because you're at high risk of infection during the first few weeks of term when you're in contact with lots of new people.

### Condoms and contraception

Regardless of what contraception you use, you'll also need to use condoms to [protect yourself](#) from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) if you're not in an exclusive relationship where both of you have been tested. Condoms are available free from contraception and sexual health clinics, as well as some GPs' surgeries.

Many areas also have a [C-Card scheme](#) for under-25s, making access to sexual health advice and free condoms even easier. You can register for a C-Card at most student health services or sexual health clinics, and then collect the condoms you want from various distribution points including pharmacies. Some services also provide free condoms online or by post.

## Prescriptions

There are no prescription charges in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, but in England the full charge is £8.60. Being a student doesn't automatically entitle you to free prescriptions, but one student health benefit is that you may be able to access them for free or at a reduced rate through the NHS Low Income Scheme.

You need to fill in an HC1 form, which you can get from the [NHS Business Services Authority](#), students' union advice centres, and NHS hospitals as well as some pharmacies, dentists, opticians or GPs' surgeries.

You can also check if you qualify for [free prescriptions](#) for other reasons. If you don't qualify and you know you're going to need more than three prescriptions in three months, you can get a discount with a [pre-payment certificate](#) for £29.10, or for £104 for a year if you think you'll need more than 12 prescriptions over that period

## Mental health

The prospect of making new friends and starting a new chapter in your life is often very exciting. But moving away from home, coping with your studies and not knowing anyone when you start can be stressful. If you find yourself feeling low, losing motivation to go out or study, or feeling more anxious than usual, you may be suffering from [anxiety](#) or [depression](#).

Most universities will have free counselling services available as a student health benefit. These are run by mental health professionals such as trained counsellors and therapists. Check your university's website for details, or speak to the [mental health advisor](#) who can help you get the support you need.

You can also visit [Student Minds](#) for more help and advice. If you've been suffering for more than a couple of weeks, make an appointment with your GP as you may need medication as well as counselling.

## Dental treatment

Student health benefits don't cover free dental care either, though check-ups are free in Scotland for everyone and free to under-25s in Wales. Otherwise, you may qualify through the NHS Low Income Scheme.

If your university has a dental hospital you may be able to get free care there, but you need to be happy about being treated by supervised dental undergraduates. If you can't get free treatment, your best bet is to find an [NHS dentist](#), which will cost a lot less than going private.

## Eye care

Again, Student health benefits don't cover free eye care, but you may be able to get a free sight test and NHS vouchers towards the cost of glasses and contact lenses via the NHS Low Income Scheme. In Scotland, sight tests are free for everyone.

If you have any specific eye problems or certain other conditions such as diabetes, you are entitled to free sight tests and vouchers. Find out if you qualify [here](#).

Some companies also offer free sight tests, so it's worth asking in store or checking websites such as [Save the Student](#) – an impartial site offering money advice for students.

## Deals and discounts

Another great student health benefit is that many health and fitness companies offer great discounts for students on everything from contact lenses to gym memberships and sports gear. Find out more via the National Union of Students, [Student Beans](#), and [UniDays](#).

**Disclaimer:** This article is for information only and should not be used for the diagnosis or treatment of medical conditions. Egton Medical Information Systems Limited has used all reasonable care in compiling the information but makes no warranty as to its accuracy. Consult a doctor or other healthcare professional for diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions. For details see our [conditions](#).

<b>Last updated by:</b> Danny Chadburn 24/08/2017	
<b>Peer reviewed by:</b> Dr Sarah Jarvis MBE, FRCGP 24/08/2017	

---

View this article online at: [patient.info/news-and-features/what-health-benefits-do-students-get](http://patient.info/news-and-features/what-health-benefits-do-students-get)

Discuss What student health benefits can I get? and find more trusted resources at [Patient](http://Patient).

---



To find out more visit [www.patientaccess.com](http://www.patientaccess.com)  
or download the app



Follow us

