

Starting university is exciting but also full of change—and for many students, managing your health amidst new routines can feel stressful. One question I often hear is, “Where should I keep my medication list so I can find it quickly when I really need it?” Spoiler alert: You want a strategy that works when you're juggling deadlines, social events, and maybe even a bit of homesickness (hello, Week Seven!).

In this post, I'll give you clear, practical tips. Plus, we'll cover important related topics like registering with your GP during Freshers week, how Pharmacy-first care can help with common conditions, prescription charges and exemptions, and a simple explanation of the NHS Low Income Scheme and prepayment certificates. Let's break it all down plainly—no jargon, no scare stories, just straightforward advice you can act on.

Why Keep a Medication List?

A medication list is your personal rundown of all prescribed medicines, over-the-counter drugs, supplements, and allergy information. Why bother?

- In a crisis or emergency, having this info ready can save time and even your life.
- You avoid awkward “umm, what do I take again?” conversations with doctors or pharmacists under pressure.
- If you're juggling repeat prescriptions between home and term-time addresses, clarity helps keep your meds consistent.

Where to Store Your Medication List for Easy Access

Under stress, your brain can short-circuit. You don't want to fumble around in your backpack or sift through emails. Here are the best places to keep your medication info, with pros and cons for each:

1. Phone Notes App

Almost everyone carries a smartphone nowadays, so this is your number one go-to.

- **Pros:** Easily editable, you can add photos (like your prescription slip), and it's with you all the time.
- **Cons:** If your phone dies or is locked, access can be tricky. Always keep a passcode or biometric unlock for the app or phone.

Quick tip: Pin your medication list note to the top of your app so it's instantly visible.

2. Wallet Card

A physical card in your wallet or purse with your medication list can be a lifesaver in emergencies.

- **Pros:** Works if your phone is dead or you don't have signal. Easy to show to health professionals immediately.
- **Cons:** Cards can get lost or damaged. Make sure it's waterproof or laminated.

3. Emergency Info on Lock Screen

Many smartphones allow you to set medical info accessible from the lock screen without unlocking the phone.

- **Pros:** First responders can see it quickly without bypassing your security.
- **Cons:** Limited space for detailed lists, but great for allergies and key meds.

4. Online Cloud Storage (with caution)

You can keep a medication list in secured apps like Google Drive or Apple Notes synced with cloud.

- **Pros:** Access from any device, including computers.
- **Cons:** Needs internet, potential privacy concerns—don't share publicly.

Linking Social Media Tools to Your Medication Management

You might think Facebook or Twitter aren't relevant here—but hear me out.

- **Facebook:** Join private student health groups where members share freshers-week tips about GP registration and navigating health on campus.
- **Twitter:** Follow official NHS accounts for up-to-date advice on pharmacy-first care and prescription updates. You can save Tweets or DM yourself key info for later reference.

These platforms help you stay informed during those chaotic first weeks and remind you of deadlines like when to apply for NHS Low Income Schemes or prepayment certificates.



GP Registration During Freshers Week: Your First Step

When you arrive at uni, registering with your new GP surgery should be high on your list (ideally Week One to Three). Here's why:

- Your GP can provide repeat prescriptions closer to campus, avoiding travel back home just for meds.
- You get help adjusting medications after exams, illnesses, or changes in lifestyle.
- Immediate access to healthcare services reduces stress when you're already busy.

Don't put this off! Registration forms often require your NHS number and proof of address—have those handy, and check if the surgery allows online registration for extra convenience.

Pharmacy-First Care & Common Conditions

Pharmacy teams are <https://education.clickdo.co.uk/student-mental-health-uk-handbook/> your first port of call for many minor illnesses and health advice. Examples include:

- Colds, coughs, sore throats, and hay fever
- Skin conditions like eczema or acne
- Mild stomach upsets or diarrhoea

Pharmacists can advise on over-the-counter meds and let you know if you actually need to see your GP—saving you time and stress. Plus, they manage some prescription renewals.

Prescription Charges, Exemptions & Avoiding Overpaying

In England, prescriptions cost a fixed fee per item—currently £9.65 (as of mid-2024). But wait, there are ways to avoid or reduce these fees:

- **Exemptions:** If you're under 16, 16-18 and in full-time education, pregnant, have certain medical conditions, or receive specific benefits, you might be exempt from charges.
- **Prescription Prepayment Certificates (PPCs):** Pay upfront for 3 or 12 months of prescriptions at a flat rate if you take multiple meds regularly.

PPC Cost and When It Pays Off

Certificate Type Price Break-even Number of Items Validity Period
3-Month PPC £30.25 4 items 3 months from purchase date
12-Month PPC £108.10 12 items 12 months from purchase date

If you get more than these numbers of prescriptions in the period, a PPC usually saves you money.



NHS Low Income Scheme: Financial Help Explained

If you're struggling with prescription, dental, eye care, or travel costs, the NHS Low Income Scheme (LIS) might help. It works by giving you a certificate indicating you're eligible for free or reduced-cost healthcare services.

How to apply:

1. Fill out the application form online or at your local Jobcentre.
2. Provide proof of income; this could include recent bank statements or benefit letters.
3. Submit and wait for the certificate, which can take up to 2 weeks, so apply early, especially during Exam Season or November cough-cold-flu season!

Your 5-Minute Medication List Preparation Checklist

1. **Write a clear, current list:** Include drug names, dosages, times, allergy info, and prescribing doctor/contact.
2. **Save to your phone's Notes app:** Pin it to the top for quick recall.
3. **Create a wallet card:** Laminate if possible and keep in your wallet or purse.
4. **Set emergency info on your phone lock screen:** Check your phone settings (Health app on iPhone, Medical ID, or equivalent).
5. **Register with your GP fast (Week 1–3):** Bring your medication list to appointments.
6. **Learn about your prescription charges and exemptions:** Get a Prescription Prepayment Certificate if you take many meds.
7. **Apply for NHS Low Income Scheme if needed:** Do this early to avoid financial stress.

Final Thoughts

Don't let stress cause a med-management meltdown by keeping your medication info scattered or buried. Use your phone notes and wallet card together, register with your GP quickly in Freshers week, and don't ignore the financial support available.

Break these tasks down week-by-week for a smooth start: Week One, register with a GP and start a medication list. Week Three to Four, consider prepayment certificates or applying for the NHS Low Income Scheme if prescriptions are a worry. Week Seven, revisit your meds and update your list before those mid-semester deadlines hit.

Remember, being proactive with your health info storage means one less thing to panic about in a real emergency—and that's worth it.

Feel free to share your own tips or questions on social media, and follow official NHS and university health accounts for the latest updates.