

# Wallingbrook Health Group

## What to keep in your Medicine Cabinet

### *Pain relief*

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Painkillers such as **aspirin**, **paracetamol** and **ibuprofen** are highly effective at relieving most minor aches and pains, such as headaches and menstrual pain.

**Aspirin must not be given to children under 16.**

These medicines also help with some minor ailments, such as the common cold, by reducing aches, pain and high temperatures.

These three medicines also help reduce the inflammation seen in arthritis and sprains

### *Antihistamines*

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Antihistamines are useful for dealing with allergies and insect bites.

- Antihistamine creams soothe insect stings and bites, and rashes and itching from stinging nettles.
- Antihistamine tablets such as **loratadine (Clarityn \*)**, **cetirizine (Zirtek\*)** and **chlorpheniramine (Piriton\*)** help control hay fever symptoms and calm minor allergic reactions to food. They can also help calm itchiness during chickenpox.

**Some antihistamines may cause drowsiness.** Ask your pharmacist for advice when buying these.

*\* common brands but other own brands are available*

### *Oral rehydration salts*

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Fever, diarrhoea and vomiting make us lose water and essential minerals, and can lead to dehydration.

If you have these symptoms and can't continue your normal diet, oral rehydration salts can help restore your body's natural balance of minerals and fluid, and relieve discomfort and tiredness. These are an easy way to take in minerals and fluid, and help your recovery.

They don't fight the underlying cause of your illness, such as a virus or bacteria.

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### *Anti-diarrhoea tablets*

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Diarrhoea is caused by a range of things, such as food poisoning or a stomach virus, and can happen without warning. It's a good idea to keep an anti-diarrhoea medicine at home.

The most common anti-diarrhoeal is **loperamide** (sold under the names **Imodium**, **Arret** and **Diasorb**, among others). It works by slowing down the action of your gut.

**Don't give anti-diarrhoeals to children under 12** because they may have undesirable side effects. Speak to your GP or pharmacist for advice about a child with these symptoms.

### *Indigestion treatment*

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If you have stomach ache, heartburn or trapped wind, a simple antacid will reduce stomach acidity and bring relief.

Antacids come as chewable tablets, tablets that dissolve in water, or in liquid form.

Common products are **Rennies**, **Gaviscon** and many other own brands



### *Remember to:*

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- Always follow the directions on medicine packets and information leaflets, and never take more than the stated dose.
- If you have questions about any of these medicines or you want to buy them, ask your local pharmacist.
- Always keep medicines out of the sight and reach of children. A high, lockable cupboard in a cool, dry place is ideal.
- Regularly check the expiry dates on a medicine. If a medicine is past its use-by date, don't use it or throw it away. Take it to your pharmacy, where it can be disposed of safely.