

GP – facts and myths

Make a difference with Mind

Here are a selection of statements, which you can select according to the age, ability, and understanding of your Scout group.

You could think about changing some of the words to make it more appropriate for your group. You could amend the statements to read out either the 'true' or 'false' versions, and you can also add your own. You can read the statements in any order, however, we recommend having 'You can only go to the GP with physical health problems, not mental health problems' as the final statement, as this leads on to the work you will be doing around mental health.

True or false:

- It is the law to be registered with a GP.
 - False: You do not have to be registered with a GP. However, as your GP is usually your first point of contact when you are unwell, you should register with a practice as soon as possible, even if you are not currently poorly.
- GPs can come to your home for an appointment.
 - True: If you're unable to visit your GP practice for medical reasons, you can ask your GP to make a home visit.
- GPs can give you advice over the phone.
 - True: If you're unable to visit your GP for health or other reasons, or if you want to have a conversation with your GP sooner than the next available in-person appointment, your GP may be able to give you advice through a telephone consultation.
- Everyone has to pay for prescriptions.
 - False: If you live in England and are under 16, or if you are aged 16 to 18 and are in full-time education, then your prescription is free (and contraceptives are always prescribed free of charge). If you live in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland, prescriptions are free at any age.
 - There are also some other groups of people who can get free prescriptions: if you're over 60, if you claim certain benefits, or if you have a medical exemption certificate (which you can get if you have certain physical health conditions).
- The GP is open at the weekend.
 - True and false: Not all GPs are open at the weekend. If you need urgent medical attention (but it is not life-threatening), you can visit an urgent care centre, which are open at least 12 hours a day every day of the week.
- It takes about 10 years to become a fully qualified GP.
 - True: To be a GP, you have to do your five year medicine degree, two foundation years, then three years vocational training ('on the job') before you become fully qualified. But GPs must also keep training and learning throughout their whole careers to keep up to date, in order to provide the best care.
- You can only make an appointment to see a GP if you are over 18.
 - False: Anyone can make an appointment to see a doctor, no matter how old they are. But if you're under 16, you may be asked if anyone knows you are registering with the doctor.

- You should phone your GP first in a medical emergency.
 - False: You should always phone 999 when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk. If you think it is urgent, but not an emergency, you can call 111 and speak to a fully trained adviser.
- Your parent or carer always has to get your prescription for you.
 - False: You have a right to confidential healthcare and treatment, no matter how old you are. If you are under 16, your doctor needs to be sure that you understand and are able to make your own decisions about your medical treatment. If you do not want your parent or carer to know, tell your doctor at the start of your appointment. If you are over 16, your doctor won't tell anybody else about your medical treatment.
- It is free to visit the GP.
 - True: Visits to your GP are free, but you'll usually need to make an appointment.
- You can only go to the GP with physical health problems, not mental health problems.
 - False: You can go to your GP with mental health problems as well. We will be learning more about and supporting Mind's 'You and Your GP' campaign. Mind want everyone with a mental health problem who visits their GP practice to get the support that best suits their needs.