

Are you claiming free prescriptions?



Don't assume you're entitled.
You could have to pay up to £100 –
as well as your prescription charge.

What entitles you to free NHS prescriptions?

Your age

You're entitled to free prescriptions if you're:

- under 16
- 16, 17, or 18 and in full-time education
- 60 or over

Students aged 19 and over aren't automatically entitled to free prescriptions, but can apply for help through the NHS Low Income Scheme (see page 6).

Certain benefits

Not all benefits entitle you to free prescriptions. Check which type of benefit you get before you tick the back of your prescription.



You're **entitled to free prescriptions** if you are named on a claim for:

- Income Support
- **income-based** Jobseeker's Allowance
- **income-related** Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit (**Guarantee Credit**) paid on its own, or Pension Credit (**Guarantee Credit with Savings Credit**)
- certain Tax Credits - see page 4, under 'NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate'
- Universal Credit - but only if your earnings in your last assessment period were **£435** or less, or **£935** or less if you get an element for a child or have limited capability for work.



You're **not entitled** to free prescriptions if you are named on a claim for:

- **contribution-based** Jobseeker's Allowance, paid on its own
- **contribution-based** Employment and Support Allowance, paid on its own
- Pension Credit (**Savings Credit**), paid on its own
- any benefit paid on its own and not listed in the green box opposite (such as Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or Incapacity Benefit)

Certificates

You're entitled to free NHS prescriptions if you have one of these certificates and it is still valid.

NHS maternity exemption certificate

If you're pregnant or have given birth in the previous 12 months you can claim free prescriptions, but only if you have a valid **maternity exemption certificate**. Ask your doctor, midwife or health visitor how to apply.



NHS medical exemption certificate

If you have a medical condition or physical disability, you are only entitled to claim free prescriptions if you have a **valid medical exemption certificate**.

To find out if your condition will qualify you for a certificate, check the full list of accepted conditions at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/medex or check with your doctor. If you're eligible for a medical exemption certificate, ask your doctor how to apply.

NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate

You will automatically be sent this certificate if your annual family income used to work out your tax credits is **£15,276** or less and you get:

- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit including a disability element
- Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit paid together

An NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate is valid for up to 7 months. Your partner and any young people included in your claim will be entitled to free prescriptions while your certificate is valid. For more information go to www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/taxcredits

HC2 certificate (full help with health costs)

If you have applied to the NHS Low Income Scheme and been issued with an HC2 certificate you are entitled to free prescriptions.

Your partner and any dependant children under 19 named on your claim will also be entitled to free prescriptions while the certificate is valid. Make sure you know the expiry date of the certificate.

An HC3 certificate (partial help with health costs) does not entitle you to free prescriptions.

For more information about the scheme and how to apply go to www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/lowincomescheme

War pension exemption certificate

If you have a war pension exemption certificate, you are entitled to free prescriptions that relate to your accepted disability.

To apply for a certificate, contact Veterans UK on 0808 1914 218.

What to do at the pharmacy

If you have an exemption certificate or prescription prepayment certificate, check the expiry date before claiming free NHS prescriptions. If you're included in a benefits claim, check that your benefit entitles you.

✗ If you are not entitled to free prescriptions

If you know that you're not entitled to free prescriptions, or your exemption certificate or PPC has expired, **don't claim**. Pharmacy staff will tell you how much you need to pay.

If you claim free prescriptions that you're not entitled to, you could have to pay up to £100, as well as the original prescription charge.



? Not sure?

If you're not sure whether you're entitled to free prescriptions (or you're waiting to find out) you should pay and ask pharmacy staff for an NHS receipt (form FP57).

If you find out later that you are entitled and have proof, you can apply for a refund. The NHS receipt will tell you what to do.

✓ If you are entitled to free prescriptions

Make sure you tick the right box on the back of the prescription.

If someone else collects the prescription on your behalf, make sure they know which box to tick.

If pharmacy staff ask for proof that you don't have to pay, you can show your benefit entitlement or award letter, or your exemption certificate.

Help with prescription costs

NHS Low Income Scheme (including students and pensioners)

You may be able to get help with the cost of your prescriptions and other NHS charges through the NHS Low Income Scheme.

You can apply if your savings, investments or property (not including where you live) are no more than **£16,000**, or no more than **£23,250** if you permanently live in a care home.

Find out more and how to apply at:
www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/lowincomescheme

Prescription prepayment certificates

If you get regular prescriptions, you could save money by buying a prescription prepayment certificate (PPC).

A PPC lets you get as many NHS prescriptions as you need for a set price.

It is valid for either 3 months or 12 months, depending on the type of PPC you buy. Go to www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppc for current prices.

How to buy a PPC:

- go to www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppc
- call us on 0300 330 1341
- ask pharmacy staff for an FP95 form

You can also buy PPCs over the counter at some pharmacies (a list is available at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppc).

Free medications

These medications are free for everyone:

- prescribed contraceptives
- medication for the treatment of a sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- medicines supplied at an NHS clinic or hospital for the treatment of:
 - a mental disorder (for people with a supervised community treatment order)
 - tuberculosis
- any medicine administered at an NHS hospital

Still not sure if you're allowed to claim free prescriptions?

Answer a few questions online to find out what help you could get with the cost of your prescriptions and other NHS charges.

It takes less than 5 minutes.

Go to www.gov.uk/help-nhs-costs



For more information

NHS Help with Health Costs

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/healthcosts

Medical and maternity exemption certificate helpline

0300 330 1341

NHS Low Income Scheme helpline

0300 330 1343

NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate helpline

0300 330 1347

Prescription prepayment certificate (PPC) helpline

0300 330 1341

Benefits information

www.gov.uk/dwp

Pension Service helpline

0800 731 0469

Jobcentre Plus helpline

Universal Credit live service

0800 328 9344

Jobcentre Plus helpline

Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance

0800 169 0310

Universal Credit full service

0800 328 5644

Tax Credits helpline

0345 300 3900

The information in this guide was correct as of March 2018.

The latest version is available at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/freeprescriptions

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