



THEME 12

Looking after yourself

Topic introduction

Background

Looking after yourself, or 'self-management' is about keeping fit and healthy, understanding when you can look after yourself, when a pharmacist can help and when to get advice from your GP or another health professional.

If you have a long-term condition, self-management is about understanding that condition and how to live with it.

In order for people to be able to look after themselves effectively, they need to be well informed and they need to feel confident about looking after their own health, and that of their families. They also need to know how to access and use health and care services when they encounter an issue, condition or illness which they are not able to fully look after themselves.

Supporting learners with language, literacy and numeracy is one way of helping people access, understand and use health information and services to help them better manage their health and wellbeing on a day to day basis.

National targets/policies

The NHS Five Year Forward View (2014) outlined the need for a big improvement in prevention i.e. helping people live healthier lives so that they don't get ill so much. This is very important for the future health of millions of people, especially today's children, and for making sure the NHS can keep working into the future.

People have a key role in protecting their own health, making healthy lifestyle choices, choosing appropriate treatments and managing long-term conditions. Even people with long term health conditions, who tend to be heavy users of the health service, are likely to spend less than 1% of their time in contact with health professionals. The rest of the time they, their carers and their families manage on their own. For this reason, it is vital that they are able to access, understand and use health information and services effectively and confidently to protect and improve their health and wellbeing but also to make informed decisions about care and treatment.

The NHS Five Year Forward View set out a central ambition for the NHS to become better at helping people to manage their own health by:

- improving the information to which people have access, both clinical advice and information about their condition and/or history;
- doing more to support people to manage their own health – staying healthy, making informed choices of treatment, managing conditions and avoiding complications through investment in evidence-based approaches such as group-based education for people with specific conditions and self-management educational courses, as well as encouraging independent peer-to-peer communities to emerge;
- increasing the direct control people have over the care that is provided to them by promising to give patients choice over where and how they receive care.

'Patient activation' describes the knowledge, skills and confidence a person has in managing their own health and care. Evidence shows that when people are supported to become more activated, they benefit from better health outcomes, improved experiences of care and fewer unplanned care admissions.

This theme

This theme follows on from Theme 11: 'Making decision about your health'. It focuses on some specific health behaviours that learners may need to manage for themselves, for example:

- making decisions about whether to take up immunisation or screening invitations
- taking their own or a child's temperature
- following instructions for taking prescribed medicines.

The topic 'Advice from the pharmacist' outlines the support learners can get from community pharmacists.

The topics in this theme are:

- Taking temperatures
- Immunisation and health screening
- Remembering spoken instructions
- Checking medicine labels
- Dosage and timing
- Advice from the pharmacist

Further information and suggestions

Local community pharmacists should be able to provide information about pharmacy services and may be willing to talk to learners about this.

Mapping to Functional Skills/Core Curriculum

Topic	Functional Skills		Core Curriculum	
	English	Maths	Literacy/Language (L)	Numeracy (N)
1 Taking temperatures		E3.14		MSS1/E3.9
2 Immunisation and health screening	E3.12 L1.14 E3.8	E3.21 E3.12	Rt/E3.5 Rt/L1.5 Rw/E3.1	HD1/E3.1 HD1/L1.4 MSS1/E3.3
3 Remembering spoken instructions	E3.2 E3.1 E3.2		SLc/E3.4 SLlr/E3.2 SLlr/E3.4	
4 Checking medicine labels	E3.12 E3.9 E3.10 E3.8	L1.20	Rt/E3.5 Rt/E3.7 Rt/E3.8 Rw/E3.1	MSS1/L1.2
5 Dosage and timing	E3.9 E3.12 E3.9 E3.10	L1.20 E3.3	Rt/E3.7 Rt/E3.5 Rt/E3.3 Rt/E3.8	MSS1/L1.3 N1/E3.6
6 Advice from the pharmacist	E3.2 E3.1		Lr/E3.2 Lr/E3.3	