

Are you off to university or college for the first time?

Going away from home is always exciting, especially for the first time. There's lots to plan and do. That includes having all the healthcare you may need, in place, before you go.

The **NHS Website** offers lots of advice for students and it's a great place to look up anything you want to know or may be worried about.

Before you go leave home, here are a few things you can do:

1. Register with a GP – your health centre attached to your college or university may be the most convenient
2. Register with a dentist – find a local NHS dentist as dental problems can't be dealt with by doctors. Not all treatment is free, even under the NHS, but you may be able to apply for help with health costs.
3. Check your vaccinations – contact the GP you're registered with to ask for the **Men ACWY vaccine** to prevent getting meningitis W disease. You'll be at particularly high risk in the first weeks of term, when you will come into contact with many new people of a similar age.
Also check you have had the full programme of MMR vaccinations (2 doses) to prevent mumps. If you're not sure, ask your GP for a catch-up vaccination.
4. Get contraception - even if you don't plan to be sexually active while you're a student, it's good to be prepared!
5. Rest and healthy eating - student life may not be renowned for early nights and healthy eating, but getting enough sleep and eating well (including fruit and veg) will help you stay healthy. You will also have more energy for studying and enjoying student life!
6. If you have a disability - higher education students living in England can apply for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) if you have a:
 - disability
 - long-term health condition
 - mental health condition
 - specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia
7. Be aware of mental health problems - being away from home and the pressures of work can affect your mental health. Talk to someone, they may well be feeling the same. There's also lots of help available - most universities have counselling services. For more serious concerns, see your GP.