



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

A Guide to... Keeping Healthy, Keeping Safe



Student Life and Wellbeing



Welcome

The Welfare, Immigration and Funding Team are here to help ensure you enjoy your university experience to the full and to enhance your experience so that you get the most out of university life and learning. We provide information and advice on a wide range of practical issues including keeping yourself healthy and safe.

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1. General, Medical and Dental

Primary Health Care

UK, International or EU students who are registered on a full-time programme of study which lasts longer than six months are strongly advised to register with a local doctor (GP) on arrival in Newcastle or Gateshead. If you are a home student you will still be able to see your family doctor as a visitor when at home during vacations. If you continue to live at home whilst studying you may remain with your own doctor. Please register as soon as you arrive in Newcastle or Gateshead – don't wait until you are ill to find a doctor as you may not feel well enough to take the required action.

If you do not meet the above criteria it is vital that you take out medical insurance for yourself and your dependants from a reputable company. Medical insurance should be arranged for the duration of your stay. EU students should have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) to establish entitlement to free NHS treatment.

Help with Health Costs

Students in full-time education who are under the age of 19 are automatically entitled to full help with health costs (except travel costs, in which case you can apply to the Low Income Scheme).

If you are aged 19 or over and receive National Health Service (NHS) treatment you will be asked to pay for prescriptions and some health care services. However you can apply for help with your health costs on Form HC1 which is available from doctors' or dentists' surgeries.

Your entitlement to help with health costs is means-tested so depends on your circumstances.

You will be asked to supply information about your income and expenditure. Once you have submitted your HC1 form an assessment will be carried out and if you are eligible for a full exemption you will be sent an HC2 certificate. If you are eligible for a partial exemption you will be sent an HC3 certificate which will outline what you will be expected to pay towards your health care costs.

International students please note: If you are a student from outside the EU you need to pay for health care in the UK. The passing of the Immigration Act 2014 in May 2014 has put in place the legal framework for a new NHS charging regime for migrants in the UK.

The Act introduces a new charge for some migrants, including students at the point of applying for a visa, prior to entering the UK. The charge (approximately £150 per year) will be paid as part of your visa fee, in advance of your arrival in the UK, and will secure the same access to primary and secondary NHS services in the UK as someone considered to be 'ordinarily resident' in the UK. If you have not done this at the time of applying for your visa you will be charged 150% of the usual cost of the treatment you receive. There is some treatment that is free for everyone and some exemptions.

How to Register with a Doctor

It's really important to register with a local GP practice (doctor) to look after your current or future health needs. This is particularly important due to COVID-19 and the ongoing vaccination programme.

Your GP practice is the first port of call for the majority of your health needs both physical and mental. At a GP practice you will be able to see different medical professionals, depending on your needs – if you need access to other health services or you need to go to hospital for specialist treatment, it's your own GP/Doctor who will arrange this.

Register with your GP practice today. You will be able to choose a GP practice using the interactive map which shows key GP practice information:

Visit: **studentgpreg.org.uk**

Or scan the below QR code:



Dental Care

It is advisable for students to register with a dental practice. There are many NHS dental practices in Newcastle, the names and addresses of which are available from the web site below. For dental emergencies, visit the Newcastle Dental Hospital on Richardson Road (behind the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI)).

nhs.uk/service-search

Other Medical Services

Pharmacy – also referred to as a chemist, offers advice on common problems such as coughs and colds, aches and pains. Pharmacists dispense prescriptions and other medicines.

111 NHS Telephone Advice – telephone service offered by the NHS. If you are feeling unwell the telephone service will provide you with helpful advice and refer you to the appropriate support; this could be a GP, Hospital or Pharmacy. This service is available free of charge from any phone by dialling 111.

Walk-in Centre – NHS walk-in centres offer convenient access to a range of treatments including: infections and rashes, blood pressure checks, fractures, stomach aches, vomiting and diarrhoea, minor cuts and bruises.

Minor Injuries Unit – can treat: sprains and strains, broken bones, wound infections, minor burns and scalds, minor head injuries, insect and animal bites, minor eye injuries, injuries to the back, shoulder and chest.

Accident and Emergency Departments

– these are extremely busy hospital departments and should only be used if your injury or illness is life threatening.

To search and register with a doctor, dentist or to find a hospital, walk-in centre or minor injuries unit - log onto the NHS Choices website below, go to the section of the website called 'Services near you', input the service you require (GP, Dentist or Hospital) and your home or university postcode. You will be provided with a list to choose from that is nearest to your home or university postcode.

NHS Choices
nhs.uk/service-search

Sickness and Absence Reporting

There is no overall university policy on sickness/absence notification, although each Faculty will have its own rules and regulations which will be set out in the individual Programme Handbook. However, if you are going to be absent for any length of time you should let your Programme Leader know that you are absent, and why that is. Failure to notify the University of any extended period of absence may result in

you being withdrawn from your programme of study, which could result in your visa being curtailed (international students) or your funding authority may suspend your funding.

If your absence is more long-term, and you are experiencing problems studying, or think you may have to withdraw from your course, you should talk to your Guidance Tutor or Programme Leader. You should also speak with a Welfare, Immigration and Funding Adviser in Student Life and Wellbeing, who can advise you on the financial implications of withdrawal and other related concerns.

The University has a dedicated Student Transition Team which can support you if you wish to change course, leave university, take some time out, or if you are unsure. All you need to do is: Log on to My Northumbria, go to My Records, and from the Menu click on the 'Change of Circumstances' link. Select 'Start Process' to initiate your request and the Student Transition Team will contact you.



2. Specific Health Issues

Meningitis

One of the biggest problems with meningitis is that it can develop very quickly. People can appear perfectly well and then just a few hours later become extremely ill. Another problem is that the symptoms can be difficult to distinguish from other, less serious infections. You shouldn't be too anxious about meningitis, but familiarising yourself with the common symptoms is important, as speedy identification of the disease can save lives and minimise the spread of infection.

What is Meningitis?

Meningitis means swelling and inflammation of the meninges, the lining around your brain. The most common germs that cause meningitis are viruses and bacteria.

- Viral Meningitis is more common and less serious. Usually you will have a headache and feel unwell for a while. It may not make you feel ill enough to go to the doctor. Viral meningitis gets better on its own and antibiotics are ineffective.
- Bacterial Meningitis is much more serious. There are two main types of bacterial meningitis, caused by bugs called meningococcal and pneumococcal. There used to be a third bug called haemophilus influenza, but that kind has almost disappeared now that children are immunised against it. Bacterial meningitis needs to be treated with antibiotics, fast.

What are the symptoms of Bacterial Meningitis?

- A headache and a bit of fever, just like flu.
- Fever/high temperature, though with cold hands and feet.
- Unlike flu, the headache and fever get worse, there may also be vomiting.
- Stomach cramps and diarrhoea.
- A stiff neck (moving the chin to the chest would be painful).
- Aversion to bright lights (like a very bad hangover but with a fever as well).
- Drowsiness, disorientation.
- A rash which can be anywhere on the skin. It starts like little red pin pricks, and turns into small bruises the size of a 5p coin. The rash does not fade on pressure with a glass (see bottom of page).

If you develop these symptoms, you should seek immediate medical attention. Symptoms can appear in any order and combination. Some symptoms may not appear at all.

About the rash

If there is a rash, it is worth trying the 'glass test'. The 'glass test' involves pressing a glass tumbler against the rash to see if the red spots disappear under pressure. The rash of meningococcal meningitis does not disappear on application of pressure.

What should you do?

If you think you or a friend may have meningitis, you should contact your doctor immediately and explain your concerns and your symptoms. If your symptoms occur outside surgery hours, you should call 999 or the NHS non-emergency number - 111.

Immunisation and Prevention

People who have been in contact with a confirmed case of meningitis will be offered treatment to protect them. This will mean antibiotic tablets, possibly with the addition of an injection if the infection is the sort for which there is a vaccine. It is likely that the public health doctors will arrange this but if you are in doubt, ask your doctor.

New students at university have a higher risk of developing meningitis, because they often live in close proximity with each other and therefore infection can spread more rapidly. Additionally, many students fall into one of the higher risk age groups for meningitis, 16 – 25 year olds. Because of this, it is important for students to be vaccinated against type C meningococcal infection. If prospective students have not received a meningitis vaccination, they should check with their doctor in good time so that they can have the vaccination, if required, before the start of term.

More information:

northumbria.ac.uk/meningitis

medinfo.co.uk/conditions/meningitis

meningitis-trust.org

meningitisnow.org/fight-for-now/

Mumps

What is Mumps?

Mumps is a viral infection. It mainly affects the salivary glands but sometimes other parts of the body are affected. Mumps normally affects children, but can occur at any age.

What are the symptoms of Mumps?

In mumps, one or both of the parotid (salivary) glands swell up and become painful. This creates the characteristic 'hamster' appearance of a swollen face, particularly just below and in front of the ear. The swelling lasts for between four and eight days.

Other symptoms may include:

- Pain when chewing and swallowing
- Sore throat
- Fever
- Feeling tired
- Loss of appetite
- Mild abdominal (stomach) pain
- Dry mouth
- Headache

Most cases of mumps are mild, but when complications occur they can be serious. Possible complications include swelling around the ovaries (in girls) or testes (in boys after puberty). There is some evidence that mumps can lead to sterility in men.

Other rare complications:

- Brain inflammation (encephalitis) is a rare complication; symptoms include severe headache, fever, nausea, vomiting, confusion, stiff neck and back, muscle weakness, local loss of sensation, and seizures

- Meningitis occasionally occurs, (see page 7 for symptoms)
- Another rare complication of mumps is deafness in one ear, but this only happens in around 1 in 15,000 cases
- Pregnant women who develop mumps in the first three months of pregnancy (the first trimester) have a slightly higher risk of miscarriage, but there is no evidence that mumps can cause deformities in an unborn child

What should you do?

If you think you have mumps you should contact your GP. If your symptoms occur outside of normal surgery hours you should ring the NHS non-emergency number - 111.

You should always seek medical help if you think you are developing any of the above complications.

There is no cure for mumps, so any treatment deals with symptoms. The body heals itself by producing antibodies to the virus. This provides immunity for the rest of the person's life; repeat infection is very rare.

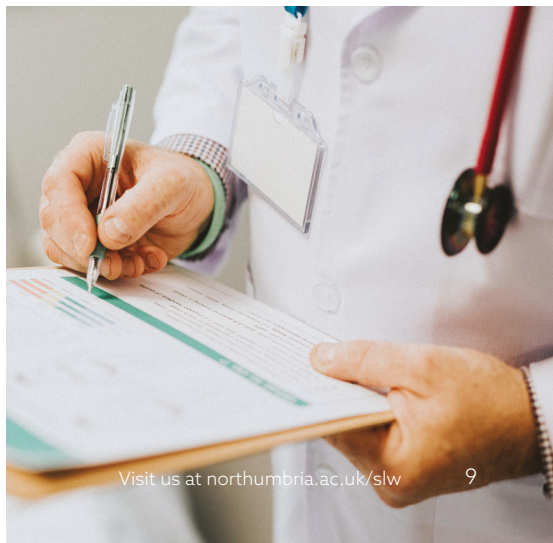
- People with mumps should drink plenty of cool fluids, especially water
- Avoid fruit juice because it stimulates saliva production, which can be painful
- A mild painkiller such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen will help to reduce pain and mild fever
- It may be soothing to hold a warm flannel against the swollen glands
- Adolescent boys and men who have severe inflammation of the testes may be prescribed a stronger painkiller, or steroid drugs called corticosteroids.

Immunisation and Prevention

Since 1988, when the childhood measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) immunisation was introduced, mumps has become less common in the UK. However, in recent years there has been an increase in cases of mumps because some parents chose not to let their child have the MMR vaccine.

However, there is no upper age limit on vaccination. Where required (for example, if a child has missed out on the vaccination programme), the two doses of the immunisation can be given at any age, as long as they are separated by an interval of three months.

Mumps is very infectious. It is passed on by coughing and sneezing the virus into the air. You should avoid contact with as many people as possible for at least five days from the onset of swollen glands. Because mumps may be spread more easily where lots of young people are living together, if you are unsure whether you have been immunised, we would ask that you check with your own GP. If you have not been vaccinated, or if you have not received the two doses of the MMR vaccine we recommend that you request a vaccination from your doctor. You will usually be charged for this.



Mental Health

University Services

- Counselling and Mental Health Support – if you are a student and have mental health or emotional issues, we strongly advise you to register with Counselling and Mental Health Support. To do this, please log on to your **Student Portal** and search for '**Counselling and Mental Health Registration Form**'. Click on the blue button at the bottom of the article to access the form.

A member of the team will get back to you within two working days, either by phone or via the Student Portal (myportal.northumbria.ac.uk), with an offer of support.

- Guidance Tutor – this is the academic member of staff you can go to if you are experiencing problems which impact on your studies and you will be told who that is when you begin your programme. You might be worried about something directly related to university life, such as problems understanding a particular area of study, or you may have more personal issues, such as work or family commitments, or you may not feel well enough to get through your work. Your Guidance Tutor may be able to help you work out ways to cope more effectively with your situation and will suggest how much support you might expect from your department in terms of extended deadlines for work etc.
- Security - if you are on campus, in case of emergencies please call:
Tel: **0191 227 3200** (available 24/7)

Contacts and Links outside the University

- Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team
Tel: **0303 123 1146** (available 24/7)
- Newcastle Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI)
Queen Victoria Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4LP
Tel: **0191 233 6161**
- The Samaritans
Tel: **08457 90 90 90** (available 24/7)
Email: jo@samaritans.org



3. Safety and Security

Safety at home and in your Student Accommodation

House Crime/Burglary

- Private student accommodation is in a high-risk category for burglary. This is because students tend to have more of the items burglars are looking for – TVs, stereos, computers, tablets and so on, so breaking into a student house can be an attractive prospect. As a result, it is important that you don't make it obvious that your home is a student house. Have a look around – can you spot the student house? Messy gardens and yards? Curtains drawn all day? You know the kind of thing. Try to be a bit smarter and make it harder for people to recognise your house as a student house.
- Make sure you have some ground rules amongst your housemates about locking doors and windows, leaving lights on etc.
- Have some ground rules about other people your housemates bring home – do they know them? Are they going to be left alone in the house?
- Be extra careful about locking up during vacation periods when the house may be totally empty for a couple of weeks. It may well be worth you and your housemates investing in a few security devices to help with this, such as lights which are programmed to switch on and switch off. You could ask your landlord if she/he would get some of these things for you. Take valuables home with you.
- If you live in a shared house, if you can, get a lock on your bedroom door and use it. Talk to your flatmates about this if you are worried about offending them – it's just a

precaution, and most insurance companies require this as part of their regulations for insurance in shared accommodation.

- Get to know your neighbours; it can be really helpful if you can trust a neighbour to keep an eye on things if you are all away.
- Don't leave spare keys outside under the doormat or flowerpot or wherever – these are obvious places to look and burglars will find them.
- If you live in halls, don't automatically let people in if you don't know them.
- Make sure you have adequate insurance. You will have to pay for this, but it won't be as expensive as replacing all your things if you do get burgled. Keep all your receipts and paperwork for your valuable items, as most insurance companies ask for these when you make a claim.
- University Security will mark valuable items where possible with an ultra violet marker pen. Alternatively you could do this yourself.

For more information, visit:
northumbria.police.uk

Fire Safety

- Be careful with electrical appliances, especially electric fires and heaters, cookers and irons. Make sure you switch them off when you have finished using them and when you go out.
- Be careful with candles, both indoor and outdoor – don't leave them unattended or in draughts, and don't go to sleep leaving them burning. In some university accommodation, you are not allowed to use candles because of the fire risk.

- If you have a barbecue, make sure you have extinguished it at the end, and don't leave it unattended. Also NEVER use a barbecue indoors under any circumstances.
- Make sure you have working smoke alarms, especially in kitchen and communal living areas – ask your landlord if you haven't got them.
- If you live in a large student house or student accommodation, there will be fire extinguishers and other equipment in case of fire. Make sure you know where they are and how to use them.
- Think about how well you know people, and whether you feel comfortable with them and what they do. There are hundreds of new people to meet at university – without being unfriendly, take your time to get to know people.
- Don't do anything you don't want to do, or you're not sure about. Don't feel pressured into doing something just because everyone else is doing it, or someone else says you should do it. Don't go somewhere you don't want to go, and be careful about going into houses, flats or cars with someone you don't know or aren't sure about. Consider the options and make your own decisions. If you do find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, then get out of it as soon as possible.
- If you do decide to go somewhere you are not familiar with, or meet people you don't know very well, let someone else know where you are going and who you are going with.
- Be careful about bringing strangers back home – just because someone else is a student doesn't mean you can trust them automatically.

Links

- Advice for students.
northumbria.police.uk/advice_and_information/advice_for_students
- Neighbourhood Watch:
neighbourhoodwatch.net

Personal Safety

Considerations about your personal safety – in your own home, travelling from home to university, going to work or attending social events, is not that much different for a student than for anyone else. However, when you first come to university, you will be faced with lots of new situations and you may well be in a totally unfamiliar city. You may feel pressured into taking risks you wouldn't have taken at home, just to fit in, or to create a certain impression with your new friends. You may just get caught out in the excitement of it all, or find you don't know where you are going because you haven't got to grips with where things are yet.

Assessing risks and deciding which ones you are prepared to take is part of becoming your own person and learning to look after yourself. Whilst you are deciding these things, here are a few points to remember:

Getting Around

- Don't walk around late at night on your own. It may seem embarrassing or un-cool to be cautious about walking home on your own, but better than to end up being in a dangerous situation. Ask friends to meet you somewhere close by, or to walk you home. Alternatively, call a taxi – make sure you get the driver's name when you make the booking, and check it before you get into the taxi. Make sure the taxi is licensed – the licence number is displayed on the dashboard.
- If you do have to walk on your own, or even if there's a couple of you, keep to busy, well-lit roads and avoid short-cuts, parks or other isolated areas.

- Always walk tall and confidently, as if you know where you are going, even if you don't. Keep your head up and look straight ahead. This will give the impression that you are confident and on familiar territory, which might help to put off potential attackers.
- Carry a personal attack alarm – whether you are male or female. Please contact the Students' Union or the Security office for information on how to obtain an alarm.
- Walk facing the traffic so a car cannot pull up unnoticed behind you.
- If a vehicle stops and the driver or passengers threaten you, make as much noise as possible – scream, shout, set off your personal attack alarm. Try to make a note of the registration number, make and colour of the car.
- If you think you are being followed, check by crossing the road – more than once, if necessary – to see if the person follows you. If you are still worried, make your way to the nearest populated area (shop, pub, well-lit building).
- Report all suspicious incidents to the Police – **999** – or, if on campus, to Security on **0191 227 3999** (general enquiries), **0191 227 3200** (emergency).
- When using public transport when it isn't so busy or especially late at night, try to sit close to the driver or guard if possible, and avoid empty carriages or top-decks.
- Ask someone to meet you from the station or bus stop, or at least let someone know what time you are expected home, and tell them what route you are taking.
- When you are out drinking or clubbing, watch your drink at all times to avoid being spiked. This applies to men, as well as women. Never leave your drink unattended. When you need to go to the toilet, ask a friend to look after your drink, or even take it with you! If you are walking around, keep an eye on your drink as you walk – it's preferable to have it in a bottle so you can cover the top with your thumb. If you're worried your drink has been spiked, tell a member of staff, or a trusted friend.



SafeZone App

Northumbria University has a SafeZone app, which you can download to your phone. The app works within defined boundaries, set by the University and is connected directly to Security. Boundaries can be altered, providing the flexibility to be used at off-site events and in other locations outside of the UK. The app has three main features which can be accessed at the tap of a button: emergency assistance, first aid and general help. Security officers are dispatched for all emergency and first aid requests, whilst the general help button connects directly to the Campus Services Helpdesk. Users can also check in, to make Security aware of their location. For more information, visit:

safezoneapp.com

What to do if you have been attacked

Violent crimes are comparatively rare, and account for a very small proportion of recorded crime. However, if you have been attacked, you may need help, and/or you may wish to report your attack:

- On campus – contact Security on **0191 227 3200**. They will liaise with other emergency services on your behalf.
- Emergency Services – police and ambulance – **999**
- Hospital Accident and Emergency Units – see section on Primary Health Care.
- Welfare, Immigration and Funding Support – call **0191 227 4127**
- Victim Support: Tel: **0808 16 89 111** or visit: **victimsupport.org.uk**

You do not have to report a crime to access the Victim Support services. It offers you the opportunity to speak to someone in confidence, information on police and

court procedures, help in dealing with other organisations, information about compensation and insurance and further contacts/links.

- Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland, PO Box 1320
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE99 5DX
Tel: **0191 222 0272**
Helpline: **0800 035 2794**
Email: **emailsupport@rctn.org.uk**
Helpline and Email Support are available: Monday to Thursday between 6:00pm and 8:30pm and Friday between 11:00am and 2:00pm
Visit: **www.rctn.org.uk**

- The Reach Centre for victims of sexual violence:
The Rhona Cross Suite
Newcroft House
Market Street East
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 6ND
Tel: **0191 221 9222**
Visit: **www.reachsarc.org.uk**

This provides free, confidential, forensic medical examinations and/or short term counselling and support for adults regardless of whether they wish to report to the police. Specially trained police officers can be contacted for information and advice, if needed.

Other Contacts/Links

- University Security Service:
Tel: **0191 227 3999** (general enquiries)
or **0191 227 3200** (emergency)
- Local Police Crime Prevention Officers:
Tel: **101**
and ask to be put through to your local police station for details of who they are and how to contact them.

- Government Crime Reduction:
Visit: **gov.uk/government/policies/crime-prevention**
- The Suzy Lamplugh Trust:
Charity with expertise about personal safety.
Tel: **0207 091 0014**
Visit: **suzylamplugh.org**

Important Numbers – Quick Look-Up

University Security – Emergency: **0191 227 3200**

University Security – General Enquiries: **0191 227 3999**

Police/Fire/Ambulance – Emergency: **999**

Police – non emergency: **0191 214 6555/ 101**

In a non-emergency situation you can also text on: **07786 200 814**

Accident and Emergency Department, Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle: **0191 233 6161**

NHS Walk-In-Centre at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead – **0191 445 5454**

Gateshead Sexual Health Services, Trinity Square Health Centre – **0191 283 1577**

Newcastle Sexual Health Services, New Croft Centre, **0191 229 2999**

NHS Walk-In Centre, Newcastle – for minor illnesses and injuries **0191 282 3000**

NHS Non- emergency: **111**

Gas leaks/supply/pressure: **0800 111 999**

Samaritans Helpline: **08457 90 90 90** or **116 123**

Dental Hospital, Newcastle: **0191 282 4693** or **0191 282 4664**

NHS Choices website - **nhs.uk/service-search**

Sexual health services - **newcastlesexualhealth.com**



**Northumbria
University**
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Contact the Welfare, Immigration and Funding Team

Visit us at one of the following Ask4Help points:

At City Campus

Student Central, City Campus Library

Student Central, City Campus East

Tel: **0191 227 4127**

At Coach Lane Campus

Student Central, Coach Lane Library

Tel: **0191 227 4127**

At London Campus

Ground Floor

Tel: **0191 227 4127**

At Amsterdam Campus

Fraijlemaborg Building

Tel: **020 703 8280**

Current Northumbria students:

Please enquire via the Student Portal:

myportal.northumbria.ac.uk

Prospective students can contact us at:

sv.welfareandinternational@northumbria.ac.uk

Tel: **0191 227 4127**

northumbria.ac.uk/wellbeing

northumbria.ac.uk/sl

If you are a distance learner, please contact us to discuss different ways in which we can help you to access the information and support you require.

Please contact us if you require a copy of this publication in an alternative format - such as braille or large print.



Tel: **0191 227 4646**

ask4help@northumbria.ac.uk

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