

Soldier Health Maintenance Manual

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Introduction

You are a soldier. You serve your country in the U.S. Army, the finest fighting force in the world. You make it that way. No one else can do your job with your pride, your discipline, and your courage.

You are the most valuable asset of the U.S. Army. Your health is important because you will do your best when you feel your best. You are responsible for your health. The Army wants you to have the tools and skills you need to take care of your own health.

Don't Take Chances with Your Health – If In Doubt, Get Medical Help

Remember: Self-care is only for minor health problems. If you are sick or hurt, see a health care provider. If you are very sick or badly hurt, call 911. Don't risk your health.

What is Self-care?

Self-care means taking care of your health when you can and using the military health care system when you need to. Self-care helps you stay healthy so that you can do your job and carry out your mission. You will do your best when you are taking care of yourself. The Self-care Program is a tool to help you take care of yourself.

Self-care can include any or all of the following:

- Improving and maintaining your health.
- Preventing illness.
- Evaluating health symptoms.
- Using self-care measures.
- Visiting a health care provider.

You make self-care decisions when you:

- Wash your hands to keep from spreading a cold to others.
- Choose what foods to eat.
- Decide for or against risky behaviors like smoking.
- Decide whether or not a health symptom needs medical attention.

What is a Health Symptom?

This Soldier Health Maintenance Manual tells you how to take care of yourself while in the Army. Use this manual to help you decide what to do about health symptoms. A symptom is a negative change in your health.

Some examples of health symptoms are:

- Blister
- Sore throat
- Skin rash
- Constipation

You can prevent most health symptoms by taking care of yourself. Other symptoms will go away with proper treatment. Treatments can be as simple as wearing proper footwear to prevent blisters or gargling with salt water for a sore throat. Treatments can also include medicines you get at a pharmacy without a prescription (called “over-the-counter” medications). Other symptoms require that you see a health care provider. Use the symptom evaluation charts in this book to help you decide what to do when you have a health symptom. If you are not sure what to do or can’t find a chart for your problem, go to Sick Call.

Self-care and Medicines

An important part of self-care is the use of approved medicines. To get the most benefit from any medicine, you must follow the instructions on how to use it. For more information on medications, see the Over-the-Counter Medication Guidelines in Appendix A of this booklet. Ask a health care provider or pharmacist if you have any questions about any kind of medicine.

Be aware that soldiers have had serious reactions from dietary supplements, herbal-type medications, and performance-enhancing drugs. You should be an informed consumer before using any of these types of products. If you have any questions, ask a health care provider or pharmacist.