



Self-care

Pharmacist–patient collaboration in self-care

Key messages from FIP following the World
Health Assembly 2026





FIP Self-Care Month **24 June - 24 July 2026**

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This resource supports the implementation of FIP Development
Goal 18: Access to medicines, devices & services

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**ACCESS TO
MEDICINES,
DEVICES
& SERVICES**



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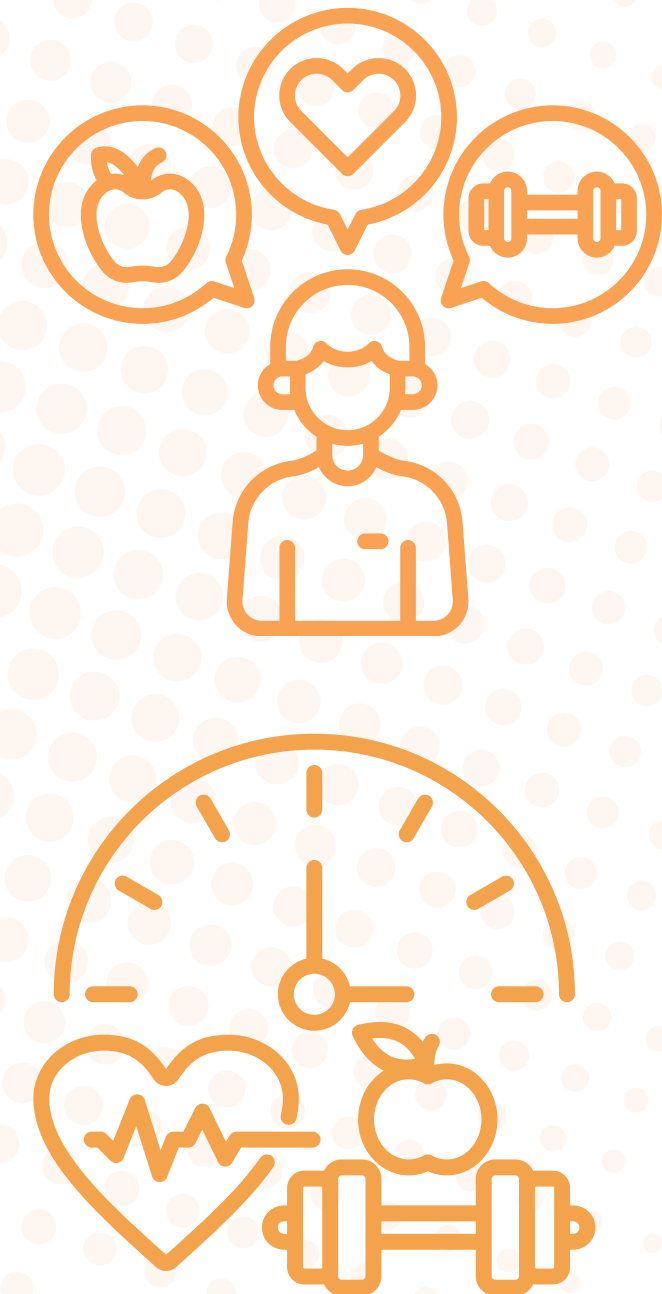


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How do people approach self-care in their daily lives?

Self-care is a natural part of how people manage their health and wellbeing. Every day, millions of people worldwide make health-related decisions independently — what to eat, whether to take a medicine, whether to monitor or ignore symptoms, or whether to seek professional care — often long before consulting a healthcare professional.





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The reality of self-care in modern healthcare

Self-care is already happening at scale. However, it takes place against a backdrop of **low health literacy, overstretched healthcare systems, increasing use of over-the-counter medicines and persistent global health workforce shortages.**

As a result, individuals are increasingly at the centre of managing their own health and well-being.





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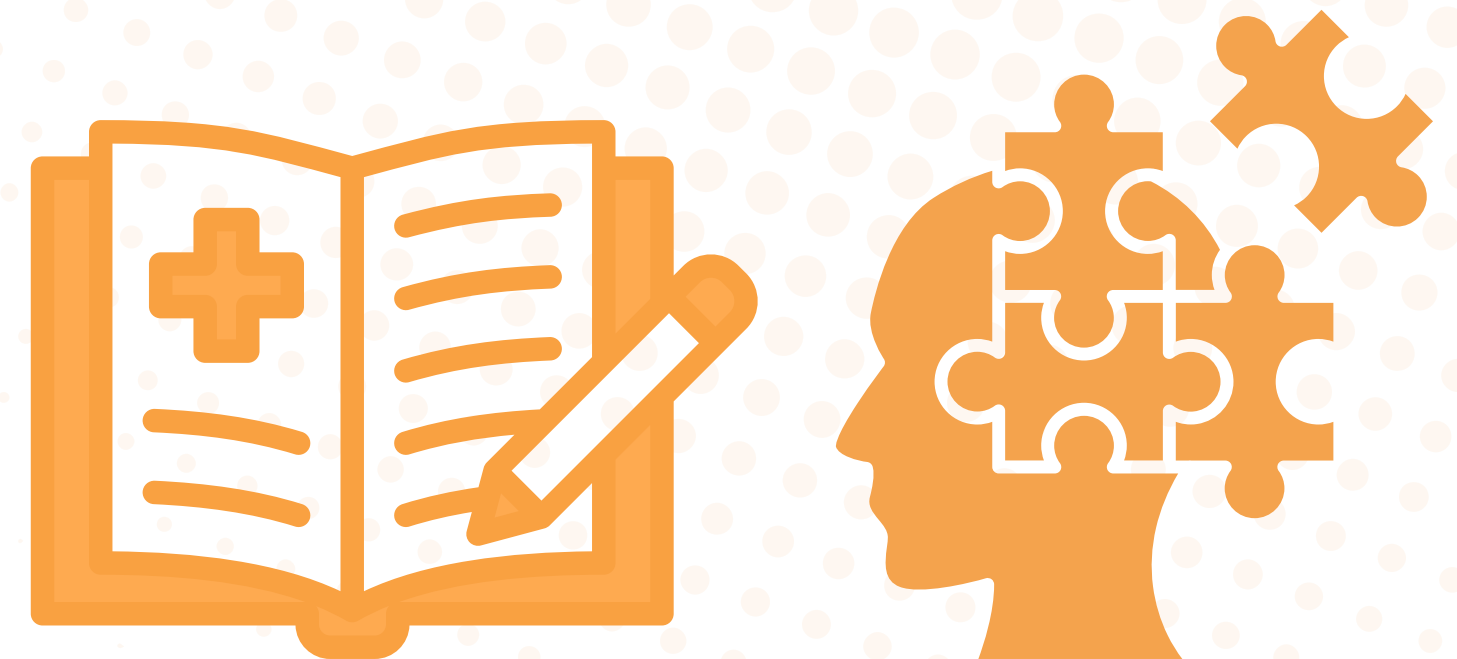
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The impact of health literacy on effective medicine use

Medicine is only effective when people understand how and why to use them correctly.

Access to information alone does not guarantee informed medicine use.

Medical language, digital misinformation, population ageing, low-literacy levels, displacement, vulnerable populations, and unequal access to digital resources can prevent people from translating available information into safe and effective health decisions.





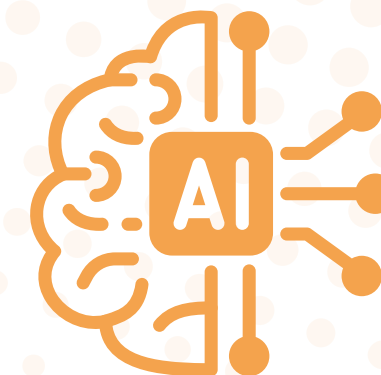
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How do patients typically seek guidance when symptoms arise?



When symptoms arise, patients often consult multiple sources of information, including internet searches, social media, artificial intelligence tools, and advice from family and friends before reaching out to a healthcare professional or community pharmacy. This contributes to delays in appropriate care and increases the risk of misinformation, inappropriate medicine use and poorer health outcomes.





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What unique value do pharmacists bring to the self-care journey?

Pharmacists combine accessibility, community trust, and clinical expertise to support self-care through symptom assessment, triage, referral, medicine optimisation and health education.

Their role extends beyond providing information; it involves helping people understand that information and apply it to make informed, healthier decisions. As trusted and accessible healthcare professionals, pharmacists are uniquely positioned to support this journey, making them key enablers of effective self-care.





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Pharmacists: The most accessible healthcare workforce



With more than 5.5 million pharmacists and over 2 million community pharmacies worldwide, the pharmacy workforce provides unparalleled access to health care.^{1,2}

Pharmacists combine community reach, trusted relationships, vaccination services, self-care support and a broad range of public health interventions, making pharmacy a cornerstone of primary health care.

However, pharmacists remain underutilised in healthcare systems facing workforce shortages, rising chronic disease burdens, and increasing demand for healthcare services.



1. International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP). The Hague, 2026. Available at: <https://www.fip.org/>
2. International Pharmaceutical Federation. Community Pharmacy at a glance 2021 – Regulation, scope of practice, remuneration and distribution of medicines through community pharmacies and other outlets. The Hague: FIP; 2021. Available at: <https://www.fip.org/file/5015>





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One profession, multiple public health impacts

Across the world, pharmacists are improving access to care and strengthening healthcare delivery, such as hepatitis C awareness initiatives, HIV services, refugee healthcare support, common ailment schemes, pharmacist prescribing, and expanded rural healthcare access. These examples demonstrate how pharmacy can address unmet healthcare needs, improve access to services, and contribute to more resilient and responsive health systems.





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Responding to the self-care challenge: A call to action

- **Governments:** Integrate pharmacists into primary healthcare and universal health coverage
- **Healthcare systems:** Invest in health literacy, self-care and patient empowerment initiatives.
- **Pharmacists:** Lead beyond dispensing by championing prevention, health coaching, health literacy and public health interventions.



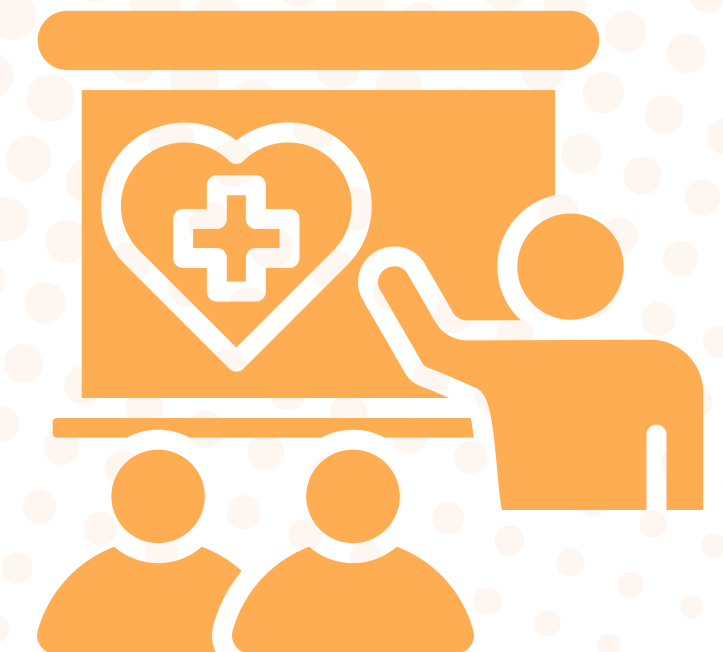


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Summary

- Self-care is a natural and essential part of how people manage their health.
- Health literacy is fundamental to safe and effective self-care.
- Pharmacists are uniquely positioned to support people throughout their self-care journey.
- The future of healthcare must be preventative, community-based, person-centred and empowering.





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For more information, visit the FIP self-care website: <https://selfcare.fip.org/> or scan the QR code below.





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