

Policy on Prescribing of Medicines that are Available for Purchase (Self Care for Self Limiting Conditions)

Empowering people with the confidence and information to look after themselves when they can, and visit the GP when they need to, gives people greater control of their own health and encourages healthy behaviors that help prevent ill health in the long-term.

In many cases people can take care of their minor ailments, reducing the number of GP consultations and enabling GPs to focus on caring for higher risk patients, such as those with comorbidities, the very young and elderly, managing long-term conditions and providing new services.

The following principles are those expected to be used across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough.

Principles:

1. An increasing range of medicines are available for purchase and **it is expected that patients will purchase such medicines** after seeking appropriate advice from a community pharmacist or other healthcare professional. (Appendix A) This is particularly the case in self-limiting illness such as those described below. The range of medicines available increases regularly.
 - Treatment of acute pain, such as a headache
 - Management of coughs and colds
 - Reducing body temperature where this is a small increase in temperature
 - Treating one-off constipation and/or diarrhoea
 - Treating minor abrasions or irritated skin
 - Minor allergic responses
 - Occurrences of head-lice infestation
 - Treatment of bouts of dyspepsia resulting from over-indulgence
 - Treatment of occasional vaginal thrush
2. Patients and the public have available an increasing range of resources for advice on medicines use, e.g. community pharmacists, NHS 111, the Internet, which can be used to enable self-care as well as their GP or a Nurse. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough CCG encourages patients and the public to access advice and purchase such homely remedies as they and their family may need.
3. Patients are expected, where possible, to try to alter their diet and life-style if it is probable that this is the cause of a minor health problem, e.g. dyspepsia.
4. Where a treatment is needed on a long-term (chronic) basis e.g. paracetamol regularly four times daily in osteoarthritis, the patient's regular clinician may choose to prescribe.
5. Community pharmacists should not advise patients to request their GP to prescribe medicines available for self-limiting conditions and minor health problems where these are available to purchase.

Appendix A: Medication which can be purchased from a Community Pharmacy and should not routinely be prescribed for self limiting conditions

(A medicine purchased OTC may have restrictions within its product license on dose / duration / site of application compared to when prescribed)

Analgesia

- Paracetamol tablets / caplets / capsules / suspension
- Ibuprofen tablets / capsules / suspension
- Co-codamol 8mg/500mg tablets / capsules
- Topical analgesics: ibuprofen, diclofenac, methyl salicylate

Cough and Cold

- Decongestants
- Simple linctus
- Sore throat treatments
- Normal saline nasal sprays / drops

Antihistamines and allergy

- Oral antihistamines: chlorpheniramine, cetirizine, loratadine, acrivastine
- Allergy and steroid nasal sprays: beclomethasone / fluticasone (*18 years and over)
- Allergy eye drops: sodium cromoglycate, nedocromil

Thrush (16 to 60 years; maximum 2 episodes in 6 months)

- Clotrimazole cream and pessaries
- Fluconazole 150mg capsule

Gastrointestinal

- Constipation: lactulose, senna, docusate, bisacodyl (tablets and suppositories), ispaghula husk, glycerine suppositories
- Diarrhoea: loperamide, rehydration sachets

Haemorrhoids (Cream, ointment and suppositories)

- Local anaesthetics and astringents: lidocaine, benzocaine, cinchocaine, zinc oxide
- Corticosteroids: hydrocortisone

Dermatology

- Emollients
- Corticosteroids for short courses (15g, 7 days treatment): Hydrocortisone 1% (*10 years and over), clobetasone (*12 years and over)
- Fungal treatments (topical): clotrimazole, miconazole, terbinafine, ketoconazole
- Fungal nail paints
- Warts and verrucas: salicylic acid, freeze treatment

Heartburn & Indigestion: Antacids and alginates

Cold Sore Treatments: Aciclovir

Teething & Mouth Ulcers

- Teething gels and pastes
- Mouth ulcer treatments

Headlice and Threadworm treatments

This list is not exhaustive and there may be alternative medicines available from the Community Pharmacist. Some of the products listed above have limited efficacy but may provide some symptomatic relief.