

**Position Statement on the Prescribing of Medications Available to Purchase over the Counter
In Ipswich and East Suffolk**

Summary

Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG does not support the prescribing of medication that is available to buy from local pharmacies or supermarkets for children or adults.

In 2017-18, Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG spent over £2.9m on items which are freely available over the counter in pharmacies or in supermarkets

NHS England have published guidance encouraging primary care to promote self-care and the use of pharmacies and supermarkets where appropriate

There are certain scenarios where patients will be eligible to have their treatment continued on the NHS see below for further details

Certain items are only available from pharmacies and are subject to meeting certain criteria due to licensing restrictions before they can be sold. If an individual does not meet the criteria, the medicine(s) must be prescribed

For further information, see guidance below

Introduction

Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG does not support the prescribing of medication that is available to buy from local pharmacies or supermarkets for children or adults.

The reasons for this are as follows:

- Patients have a responsibility to look after themselves and their children where possible and manage self-limiting minor ailments with support from their local pharmacy if needed.
- Patients should keep a small supply of simple treatments in their own medicine cabinet so they are able to manage minor ailments at home.
- All these medicines are widely available from supermarkets and pharmacies at reasonable cost.
- Many of these treatments are more expensive when prescribed on the NHS compared to when they are purchased in pharmacies or supermarkets e.g. paracetamol is approximately 4x as expensive on prescription.
- The NHS belongs to everybody and the CCG must ensure that its resources are used in the best possible way for all patients.

NHS England have also published guidance encouraging primary care to promote the use of pharmacies and encouraging self-care for a range of minor conditions (see below) which has been adapted in this guidance.

Exclusion criteria

There are however, certain scenarios where patients should continue to have their treatments prescribed which are outlined below:

- Patients prescribed an OTC treatment for a long term condition(e.g. regular pain relief for chronic arthritis or treatments for inflammatory bowel disease).
- Medication recommended by a specialist e.g. eye drops for dry eyes from ophthalmology
- For the treatment of more complex forms of minor illnesses (e.g. severe migraines that are unresponsive to over the counter medicines).
- For those patients that have symptoms that suggest the condition is not minor (i.e. those with red flag symptoms for example indigestion with very bad pain).
- Treatment for complex patients (e.g. patients on immunosuppressive agents, palliative care/end of life care).
- Patients prescribed OTC products to treat an adverse effect or symptom of a more complex illness and/or prescription only medications should continue to have these products prescribed on the NHS.
- Circumstances where the product licence doesn't allow the product to be sold over the counter to certain groups of patients. This may vary by medicine, but could include babies, children and/or women who are pregnant or breastfeeding. Community Pharmacists will be aware of what these are and can advise accordingly. For further information, please see OTC restrictions in the table below.
- Patients with a minor condition suitable for self-care that has not responded sufficiently to treatment with an OTC product.
- Patients where the clinician considers that the presenting symptom is due to a condition that would not be considered a minor condition.
- Circumstances where the prescriber believes that in their clinical judgement, exceptional circumstances exist that warrant deviation from the recommendation to self-care.
- Individual patients where the clinician considers that their ability to self-manage is compromised as a consequence of medical, mental health or significant social vulnerability to the extent that their health and/or wellbeing could be adversely affected, if reliant on self-care. To note that being exempt from paying a prescription charge does not automatically warrant an exception to the guidance. Consideration should also be given to safeguarding issues.

If patients fall into the exclusion criteria listed above they are entitled to have the medication prescribed and available on the NHS.

Where possible a note should be added to indicate that the item is not suitable to buy OTC to ensure the medication is not inadvertently stopped by another prescriber or an IESCCG Medicines Management Technician.

The table below outlines common products (not exhaustive) to treat minor conditions that are available to buy OTC. Due to licensing restrictions some products may not be suitable for patients to purchase from pharmacies and will require a prescription

Minor conditions	Common examples	Exclusion criteria (in addition to the exclusion criteria listed above)	OTC restrictions			
			Restricted class	Products	Common OTC restriction	Age allowing OTC supply
Analgesics						
Migraine	Migravele preparations	Prescribed triptans would need to be continued on prescription.				
Pain / Fever	NSAID Gels Paracetamol Co-codamol 8/500	Patients receiving 3% diclofenac gel for actinic keratosis. Long-term co-codamol 8/500- pharmacies will only sell for up to 3 days acute use.	Anti-inflammatory gels	Diclofenac 1.16% gel Ibuprofen 5% gel	Pregnancy and/or breastfeeding	14 yrs. or more
			Opioids	Co-codamol 8/500	More than 3 days continuous use	16 yrs. or more
Rubefaciants	MoveLat	None				
Antimicrobials						
Cold sores	Aciclovir 5%	Immunocompromised patients				
Conjunctivitis	Chloramphenicol eye drops/ointment.	None	Eye drops / ointment	Chloramphenicol 0.5% eye drops, chloramphenicol 1% Ointment.	Indications other than bacterial conjunctivitis pregnancy and/or breastfeeding.	2 yrs. or more
Oral thrush	Miconazole oral gel	Patients on warfarin (see MHRA alert) Diabetes				

Minor conditions	Common examples	Exclusion criteria (in addition to the exclusion criteria listed above)	OTC restrictions			
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Vaginal thrush	Clotrimazole preparations	None	Antifungals	Clotrimazole 500 mg	Can be used during pregnancy, but only under the supervision of a physician or midwife (insert without the applicator).	Over 16 and under 60 years old
				Canesten thrush cream 2%	Can be used during pregnancy, but only under the supervision of a physician or midwife.	Over 16 and under 60 years old
				Clotrimazole 10% intravaginal cream	Pregnancy (use alternative product that does not use an applicator).	Over 16 and under 60 years old
				Fluconazole 150mg capsule	Pregnancy and/or breastfeeding	Over 16 and under 60 years old
Ringworm / Athletes foot	Canestan cream Daktarin Topical terbinafine	None	Topical antifungals	Clotrimazole /hydrocortisone cream	Use on the following areas: Face Eyes Mouth Mucous membranes, Anogenital area Broken or infected skin. Duration of use > 1wk Pregnancy and/or breastfeeding	10 yrs. or more

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Fungal nail infection	Amorolfine		Antifungals	Amorolfine 5% nail lacquer	Maximum 2 nails affected	18 yrs. or more
Threadworm	Mebendazole	None		Mebendazole		2yrs. or more
ENT						
Acute sore throat	Throat sprays e.g. Difflam Lozenges e.g. Strepsils	None				
Coughs colds and nasal congestion	Cough mixtures, pseudoephedrine, simple linctus, Xylometalazine	None				
Earwax	Cerumol Olive oil Sodium bicarbonate 5% Otex	None				
Hay Fever /Seasonal Rhinitis	Chlorphenamine Cetirizine Loratidine Becometasone nasal spray Sodium cromoglicate Fluticasone	None	Anti-histamine - non drowsy	Chlorphenamine	Pregnancy and/or breastfeeding	1 yr. or more
			Anti-histamine – non drowsy	Cetirizine, Loratidine	Pregnancy and/or breastfeeding	6 yrs. or more
			Steroid nasal spray	Beclometasone nasal spray, fluticasone nasal spray	Pregnancy and/or breastfeeding	18 yrs. or more

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Hay Fever /Seasonal Rhinitis			Eye Drops	Sodium cromoglicate eye drops		6 yrs. or more
Infants and babies						
Cradle Cap	Dentinox shampoo, Capasal shampoo	If causing distress to the infant				
Teething gels	Calgel Bonjela teething gel Anbesol	None				
Infant colic	Infacol Simeticone	Colief - for transient lactase deficiency (ACBS indication)				
Nappy rash	Sudocrem Drapolene Metanium	Topical anti-fungals and corticosteroids would still need these items to be continued on prescription				
Skincare						
Mild irritant Dermatitis	Cetraben Diprobase	None				
Mild acne	Panoxyl Benzoyl peroxide	None				

Minor conditions	Common examples	Exclusion criteria (in addition to the exclusion criteria listed above)	OTC restrictions			
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Insect bites and Stings	Calamine lotion Antihistamines	None				
Antiperspirants	Driclor Odaban	None				
Mild contact dermatitis	Corticosteroids e.g hydrocortisone Emollients e.g Cetraben, E45, Diprobase	Where a patient has a diagnosis of a long term skin condition.	Steroid creams and Ointments	Hydrocortisone 1% cream/oitment	Use on the face, anogenital region, broken or infected skin. Duration of use > 1 week. Pregnancy.	10 years or more
				Clobetasone 0.05% cream		12 years or more
Dry skin	Emollients e.g Cetraben, E45, Diprobase	None				
Bath substitutes	Dermol Oilatum	None				
Sunburn due to excessive sun exposure	Calamine	None				
Sun protection	Sunsense Uvistat	ACBS indications (only on recommendation of secondary care).				
Minor burns and scald	Antiseptic creams	None				
Warts & Varrucae	Bazuka (salacllic acid) Silver nitrate 95%	None				

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Gastrointestinal						
Diarrhoea (adults)	Loperamide Oral rehydration sachets	Stoma patients Crohns Ulcerative Colitis				
Haemorrhoids	Anusol preparations Germoloid preparations	None				
Indigestion remedies (excluding Gaviscon, Peptac, Acidex)	Rennie Simeticone Maalox	None				
Infrequent constipation	Fybogel Senna	Concurrent opioids.				
Probiotics	Yakult Vivomixx	Vivomixx for Ileoanal pouchitis in adults (ACBS)				
Genitourinary						
Mild cystitis	Sodium Citrate Potassium Citrate	None				
Mouth Care						
Mouth ulcers	Bonjela Anbesol Adcortyl in Orabase	None				
Prevention of dental caries	Mouthwashes High fluoride toothpaste (can only	None				

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	be obtained on dental prescription).					
Warts and verrucae	Bazuka (salacilic acid) Silver nitrate 95%	None				
Hair And Scalp						
Dandruff	Ketocanazole shampoo, T-Gel shampoo, Capasal shampoo	None				
Head lice treatments	Hedrin Permethrin Cream Dimeticone Lotion	None				
Other						
Travel sickness	Kwells Scopaderm patch	None				
Dry eyes	Hypromellose Systane Optive	None				
Vitamins and minerals	Forceval Berocca Multivitamins	Initiated by secondary care specialists including dieticians, or where the patient has conditions that				

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		<p>may predispose them to malabsorption.</p> <p>Vitamins for alcoholism e.g. vitamin co-strong and thiamine.</p> <p>Vitamin D doses of >1000 units/day</p>				