

South East London Area Prescribing Committee
Position statement for items available over-the-counter
(OTC) for self-care

Reference:	PS-013																																					
Intervention:	Prescribing of items available over the counter (OTC) for self-care																																					
Date of Decision:	December 2018, updated February 2019																																					
Date of Issue:	January 2019, re-issued February 2019																																					
Recommendation:	<p>GREY: Not recommended for prescribing in South East London for minor/self-limiting conditions.</p> <p>The prescribing of items available OTC for self-care is NOT supported by South East London CCGs' prescribers in line with NHS England's national guidance on <i>Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)</i>.</p> <p>This is because these conditions may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ considered to be self-limiting and so do not need treatment as they will heal or be cured of their own accord; ▪ considered to lend itself to self-care i.e. the person suffering does not normally need to seek medical advice and can manage the condition by purchasing OTC items directly. <p>The OTC items included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ can be purchased over the counter, sometimes at a lower cost than that which would be incurred by the NHS; ▪ there is little evidence of clinical effectiveness. <p>Additionally the routine prescribing of vitamins, minerals and probiotics is also NOT supported due to limited robust evidence of clinical effectiveness.</p> <p>Information for patients is available at: https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/medicines/why-cant-i-get-prescription-over-counter-medicine/</p>																																					
Further Information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specialists, consultants, GPs, nurses or pharmacists will no longer routinely prescribe OTC items for a range of minor health conditions. ▪ Over-the-counter items are available for patients to buy in a pharmacy or other outlets e.g. supermarkets or petrol stations, in your local community. ▪ The team of health professionals at local pharmacies can offer help and clinical advice to patients to manage minor health concerns, or, if symptoms suggest it's more serious, they can ensure referral to the care needed. <p>This applies to treatments for the following conditions:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td><i>Acute sore throat</i></td> <td><i>Infrequent cold sores of the lip</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Minor burns and scalds</i></td> <td><i>Sun protection</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Conjunctivitis</i></td> <td><i>Infrequent constipation</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Mild cystitis</i></td> <td><i>Teething/mild toothache</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Coughs, colds & nasal congestion</i></td> <td><i>Infrequent migraine</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Mild dry skin</i></td> <td><i>Threadworms</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Cradle cap</i></td> <td><i>Insect bites and stings</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Mild irritant dermatitis</i></td> <td><i>Travel sickness</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Dandruff</i></td> <td><i>Mild acne</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Mild to moderate hayfever</i></td> <td><i>Warts and verrucae</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Diarrhoea (adults)</i></td> <td><i>Haemorrhoids</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Dry eyes/sore tired eyes</i></td> <td><i>Oral thrush</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Mouth ulcers</i></td> <td><i>Head lice</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Earwax</i></td> <td><i>Prevention of tooth decay</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Nappy rash</i></td> <td><i>Indigestion and heartburn</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Excessive sweating</i></td> <td><i>Ringworm/athletes foot</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Infant colic</i></td> <td rowspan="2"><i>Minor pain, discomfort and fever (e.g. aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain)</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Sunburn</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><i>Dietary supplementation with vitamins, minerals and probiotics</i></td> </tr> </table> <p>This core list is common to all South East London CCGs and trusts. For additional categories not present in the core list, please refer to the individual CCG website or contact details below.</p>	<i>Acute sore throat</i>	<i>Infrequent cold sores of the lip</i>	<i>Minor burns and scalds</i>	<i>Sun protection</i>	<i>Conjunctivitis</i>	<i>Infrequent constipation</i>	<i>Mild cystitis</i>	<i>Teething/mild toothache</i>	<i>Coughs, colds & nasal congestion</i>	<i>Infrequent migraine</i>	<i>Mild dry skin</i>	<i>Threadworms</i>	<i>Cradle cap</i>	<i>Insect bites and stings</i>	<i>Mild irritant dermatitis</i>	<i>Travel sickness</i>	<i>Dandruff</i>	<i>Mild acne</i>	<i>Mild to moderate hayfever</i>	<i>Warts and verrucae</i>	<i>Diarrhoea (adults)</i>	<i>Haemorrhoids</i>	<i>Dry eyes/sore tired eyes</i>	<i>Oral thrush</i>	<i>Mouth ulcers</i>	<i>Head lice</i>	<i>Earwax</i>	<i>Prevention of tooth decay</i>	<i>Nappy rash</i>	<i>Indigestion and heartburn</i>	<i>Excessive sweating</i>	<i>Ringworm/athletes foot</i>	<i>Infant colic</i>	<i>Minor pain, discomfort and fever (e.g. aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain)</i>	<i>Sunburn</i>	<i>Dietary supplementation with vitamins, minerals and probiotics</i>	
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<p>Exceptions (as per NHS England Guidance):</p>	<p>This guidance applies to all patients, including those who would be exempt from paying prescription charges, unless they fall under the exceptions outlined. To note that for vitamins, minerals, probiotics and those self-limiting conditions where there is limited evidence of clinical effectiveness for the treatments used (e.g. OTC items for cough, sore throat and infant colic), then the general exceptions do not apply. Specific exceptions are included (if applicable) under the relevant item and/or condition in the national guidance.</p> <p>There are however, certain scenarios where patients should continue to have their treatments prescribed and some examples are outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patients prescribed an OTC treatment for a long term condition (e.g. regular pain relief for chronic arthritis or treatments for inflammatory bowel disease). ▪ For the treatment of more complex forms of minor illnesses (e.g. severe migraines that are unresponsive to OTC items). ▪ 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. immunosuppressed patients). ▪ 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 OTC to certain groups of patients. This may vary by medicine, but could include babies, children and/or women who are pregnant or breast-feeding. Community Pharmacists will be aware of what these are and can advise accordingly. ▪ 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. 	
<p>Local CCG implementation:</p>	<p>Bexley CCG</p>	<p>https://www.bexleyccg.nhs.uk/Your-Services/choosing-the-right-place-to-go.htm</p>
	<p>Bromley CCG</p>	<p>https://www.bromleyccg.nhs.uk/over-the-counter-prescribing.htm</p>
	<p>Greenwich CCG</p>	<p>https://www.greenwichccg.nhs.uk/Your-Health/self-careadvice/Pages/default.aspx</p>
	<p>Lambeth CCG</p>	<p>https://www.lambethccg.nhs.uk/your-health/keeping-well/Pages/Self-care.aspx</p>
	<p>Lewisham CCG</p>	<p>https://www.lewishamccg.nhs.uk/your-health/Pages/Selfcare.aspx</p>
	<p>Southwark CCG</p>	<p>https://www.southwarkccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/Shaping-services/Pages/NHS-prescriptions-in-Southwark.aspx</p>
<p>Cost impact for agreed patient group</p>	<p>For the period April 2017 – March 2018, a total of £13,833,552 was spent across the six CCGs on self-care items (<i>Source: PrescQIPP data, October 2018</i>).</p>	
<p>Usage Monitoring & Impact Assessment</p>	<p>Acute Trusts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate this information to relevant teams within the Trust, for example Emergency Departments and outpatient clinics • Monitor requests for self-care items. <p>CCGs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor prescribing via PrescQIPP/e-pact2 and exception reports from prescribers if inappropriate requests to prescribe are made to primary care. 	
<p>Evidence reviewed:</p>	<p>1. <i>Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs.</i> NHS England; March 2018. Available here.</p>	

NOTES:

- a) Area Prescribing Committee recommendations, position statements and minutes are available publicly via the [APC website](#).
- b) This Area Prescribing Committee position statement has been made on the cost effectiveness, patient outcome and safety data available at the time. The position statement will be subject to review if new data becomes available, costs are higher than expected or new NICE guidelines or technology appraisals are issued
- c) **Not to be used for commercial or marketing purposes. Strictly for use within the NHS.**