

**Position Statement for Prescribing Preparations Available to  
Purchase Over the Counter (OTC) for Self Care**

Part of NHS Lambeth CCG's ["Healthier Together" Five Year Strategy](#) is to deliver best value by ensuring that we live within our means and use our resources well. Therefore to help us deliver our strategy and continue to support the cost effective, evidence based use of medicines, NHS Lambeth CCG no longer supports the routine prescribing of medications for acute (short-term) illnesses, minor and/or self-limiting conditions; and health supplements.

**Why are we doing this?**

- To encourage patients to self care i.e. *to take actions for themselves, on behalf of and with others in order to develop, protect, maintain and improve their health, wellbeing or wellness*
- To empower patients to manage minor self-limiting conditions at home with support from community pharmacy; and seek help when needed
- To ease the pressure on NHS services by reducing demand on prescriber consultation time, including out of hours services, for acute (short-term) illnesses, minor and/or self-limiting conditions
- To help contain the costs of medicines on the local NHS budget
- To free up clinician time for people who have more complex healthcare needs and who need more active support in managing their health
- To increase patient awareness of preparations which are of low clinical effectiveness, where there is a lack of robust evidence of clinical effectiveness and/ or can be purchased over the counter

Further information can be found in our NHS Lambeth CCG Governing Body Meeting in Public Report [Proposals for local guidance on NHS Prescribing in Lambeth. June 2016](#)

**What treatments and preparations for acute (short-term) illnesses, minor and/or self-limiting conditions are included and why?**

- Pharmacy Only (P) and General Sales Lists (GSL) treatments that can be purchased over the counter from a pharmacy with or without advice
- GSL treatments (including a patient information leaflet) that can be purchased from other retail outlets such as supermarkets, petrol stations, convenience and discount stores

- Treatments that are used to treat a condition that is considered to be self-limiting and so does not need treatment as it will heal/resolve by itself; and/or
- Treatments that are used to treat a condition which lends itself to self care i.e. that the person suffering does not normally need to seek medical care and/or treatment for the condition
- Treatments that are often available to purchase over the counter at a lower cost than would be incurred by the NHS on a prescription

**Examples of treatments available to purchase over the counter, which should no longer be routinely prescribed in Lambeth. THIS LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE.**

<b>Treatments [acute (short term), minor and/ or self-limiting condition commonly used to treat]</b>	<b>Examples of preparations in each area (NB This is not an exhaustive list)</b>
Acne treatment - topical	Benzoyl peroxide, potassium hydroxyquinoline sulphate
Analgesic treatment for short term use (acute pain, fever, headache, soft-tissue injury, musculoskeletal joint injury)	Paracetamol tablets and liquid, ibuprofen tablets and liquid, topical analgesics [Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)] and rubefaciants
Anti-fungal treatment (athlete's foot, oral and vaginal thrush, ring worm)	Clotrimazole cream/pessaries/topical spray, fluconazole oral capsule, ketoconazole shampoo, terbinafine cream/spray, amorolfine nail laquer
Antiperspirant treatment (excessive sweating)	Aluminium chloride hexahydrate
Cold sore treatment	Aciclovir cream, penciclovir cream, cetrimide, cold sore patches
Colic treatment	Simeticone, dimeticone, lactase enzyme, gripe water
Constipation treatment for short term use, less than 72 hours	Senna, ispaghula husk, docusate sodium, lactulose, sodium picosulfate
Cough, cold and sore throat treatment	Capsule, tablet, syrup, linctus, powder, lozenge and pastille preparations for coughs, colds and sore throats
Diarrhoea treatment for short term use, less than 72 hours	Loperamide, oral rehydration salts
Ear wax remover	Oils, sodium bicarbonate, urea hydrogen peroxide, docusate sodium
Eye treatments for infected or dry eyes	Chloramphenicol eye drops/ointment, artificial tears and ocular lubricants containing hypromellose, carmellose, carbomer, sodium hyaluronate, liquid paraffin, white soft paraffin e.g. Liquifilm®, Snotears®, Clinitas®, Hylo-tear®, Systane®

Haemorrhoid treatment for short term use 5-7 days	Anusol®, Germoloids®, Anodesyn and Preparation H; creams, gels, ointments and suppositories
Head lice treatment	Dimeticone lotion/spray/ mousse/gel, cyclomethicone solution/spray, malathion liquid, permethrin liquid/spray
Herbal and complementary treatments	Homeopathic preparations, bitters and tonics, herbal medicines, health supplements, probiotics (VSL#3®, Symprove®)
Indigestion and heartburn (dyspepsia) treatment	Antacid and alginate tablets and mixtures e.g. Mucogel®, Rennie®, Peptobismol®, Gaviscon®
Mouth ulcer treatment	Benzydamine and chlorhexidine mouthwashes/sprays, choline salicylate (Bonjela®), hydrocortisone buccal tablets
Nappy rash treatment	Metanium®, Bepanthen®
Scabies treatment	Permethrin liquid/cream
Seasonal rhinitis (hayfever) treatment	Steroid nasal sprays, antihistamines, sodium cromoglycate eye drops
Threadworm treatment	Mebendazole tablet/suspension
Topical steroid treatment for short term use, up to 1 week (insect bites/stings, contact dermatitis, nappy rash)	Hydrocortisone 1% cream/ointment
Vitamins and minerals	Vitamin A, B, C, D, E, K, multivitamins, zinc, calcium and magnesium supplements
Wart and verruca treatment	Salicylic acid preparations

### What general exclusions will apply?

- Medicines that can only be obtained with an NHS prescription, also known as Prescription Only Medicines (POM)
- Where an over the counter medicine outside of its marketing authorisation, also known as “off-label use” or “unlicensed use”. For example use of an over the counter medicine when it is not licensed for use during pregnancy or where age or existing specific medical condition restrictions apply
- Where an over the counter medicine is being prescribed for a long-term (chronic) condition e.g. paracetamol regularly four times daily in osteoarthritis
- Where there are possible safeguarding concerns, including, but not limited to, children where there might be concerns that treatment might otherwise not be provided.

### Guidance for prescribers

General Medical Council (May 2013) [Good practice in prescribing and managing medicines and devices](#) guidance states the following:

- 'Prescribing' is used to describe many related activities, including supply of prescription only medicines, prescribing medicines, devices and dressings on the NHS and advising patients on the purchase of over the counter medicines and other remedies
- If a patient asks for a treatment that the doctor considers would not be of overall benefit to them, the doctor should discuss the issues with the patient and explore the reasons for their request. If, after discussion, the doctor still considers that the treatment would not be of overall benefit to the patient, they do not have to provide the treatment. But they should explain their reasons to the patient, and explain any other options that are available, including the option to seek a second opinion.

Clinical judgment should be used when considering whether it is acceptable to ask patients to purchase their medication. Examples of scenarios may include over the counter products with marketing authorisation restrictions; paracetamol when required for acute headache can be purchased, however paracetamol regularly four times daily for chronic osteoarthritis would be less suitable to purchase over the counter due to quantities involved; possible safeguarding concerns e.g. in children who may not otherwise be provided treatment; possible significant clinical risk to the patient if they did not purchase the product e.g. thiamine in patients with alcohol use disorders. This is not an exhaustive list of examples.

The Self Care Forum has produced numerous resources that can be used, by healthcare professionals, to help support people to self care.

<http://www.selfcareforum.org/resources/>

### **Guidance for patients, carers and guardians**

- The NHS recommends everyone keeps a well-stocked medicine cabinet with self care medicines. Further information can be found here:  
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Pharmacy/Pages/Yourmedicinecabinet.aspx>
- Community pharmacists can offer advice on how to self care, manage your acute (short-term) illnesses and minor/self-limiting conditions, when to seek medical advice, and what to take if you are on other medication. You do not need to make an appointment to see the pharmacist, and many pharmacies are open late nights and at the weekend when the doctor's surgery is closed.
- If your problem is more serious and needs the attention of another healthcare professional such as your GP, the pharmacist will advise you on this.

- Advice is also available from:
  - NHS Lambeth CCG (<http://www.lambethccg.nhs.uk/your-health/keeping-well>)
  - NHS Choices (<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions> )
  - NHS 111  
(<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/Emergencyandurgentcareservices/Pages/NHS-111.aspx> )
  - Self Care Forum (<http://www.selfcareforum.org/> )
  - Patient.co.uk (<http://www.patient.co.uk/>)
  - Treat Yourself Better (<http://www.treatyourselfbetter.co.uk/> )

### **Comments or complaints**

We do all we can to provide good quality health services, but sometimes things don't go as they should. We welcome people telling us about how we can improve, or make a complaint about the service they have received from NHS Lambeth CCG.

We are also very pleased to receive positive feedback and compliments about our work or the quality of health services received as a local resident.

North East London Commissioning Support Unit (NEL CSU) complaints team is responsible for managing the complaints process on behalf of NHS Lambeth CCG.

The team can also give you general advice about the complaints procedure.

Tel: 0800 4561517

Email: [NELCSU.SEcomplaints@nhs.net](mailto:NELCSU.SEcomplaints@nhs.net)

Write to: NEL Complaints Team, 1 Lower Marsh, London, SE1 7NT