



Position Statement and Quick Reference Guide on the prescribing of medications available to purchase Over The Counter (OTC)



Brighton and Hove CCG and High Weald Lewes Havens CCG does not support the prescribing of medication that is available to buy from local pharmacies or supermarkets for children or adults.

This is in line with NHS England guidance “Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care” <https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines/conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed/>

The conditions and associated medicines listed below are examples of those that can be self-managed and medicines should be purchased by the patient/ parent/ guardian.

This list is not exhaustive. General exceptions to this policy are listed in [Appendix 1](#).

Items of limited clinical effectiveness

Probiotics

Supplements and vitamins with minerals

Self-limiting conditions

Acute sore throat

Infrequent cold sores of the lip

Conjunctivitis

Cough, colds, nasal congestion, allergic rhinitis and sinusitis

Cradle cap (Seborrhoeic dermatitis – infants)

Haemorrhoids

Infant colic

Mild cystitis

Molluscum contagiosum

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Minor conditions suitable for self-care

Mild irritant dermatitis

Dandruff

Diarrhoea (adults only)

Dry eyes / sore tired eyes

Earwax

Excessive sweating

Head lice

Indigestion and heartburn

Infant formula (except for pre-term, CMPA and where a dietitian has recommended)

Infrequent constipation

Infrequent migraine

Insect bites and stings

Mild Acne

Mild dry skin

Sun protection

Sunburn due to excessive sun exposure

Mild to moderate hay fever / seasonal rhinitis

Minor burns and scalds

Minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and / fever

Mouth ulcers

Nappy rash

Oral thrush

Prevention of dental caries

Ringworm / athletes foot

Teething / mild toothache

Threadworms

Travel sickness

Warts and verrucae

Weight loss treatments

Items of limited clinical effectiveness - these items should not be routinely prescribed in primary care due to limited evidence of clinical effectiveness.

Items	Specific exceptions
Probiotics e.g. sachets, liquid, acidophilus, (Yakult [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified.
Supplements and vitamins with minerals e.g. maintenance dose vitamin D, vitamin C, multivitamins, zinc, cod liver oil, (I-Caps [®] , Berocca [®] , Sanatogen [®] , Seven Seas [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medically diagnosed deficiency, including for those patients who may have a lifelong or chronic condition. Continuing need should however be reviewed on a regular basis. NB maintenance or preventative treatment is not an exception. Calcium and vitamin D for osteoporosis. Malnutrition including alcoholism (see NICE guidance) Patients suitable to receive Healthy start vitamins for pregnancy or children between the ages 6 months to their fourth birthday. (NB this is not on prescription but commissioned separately)

Self-limiting conditions - a prescription for treatment of these conditions should not routinely be offered in primary care, as the condition is self-limiting and will clear up on its own without the need for treatment.

Items	Specific exceptions
Acute sore throat e.g. sprays / lozenges / pastilles / mouthwashes, benzocaine, (Difflam [®] , Strepsils [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Red Flag' symptoms. See NHS choices for further information.
Infrequent cold sores of the lips e.g. antiviral lip creams, aciclovir cream, (Blistex [®] , Zovirax [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immunocompromised patients • 'Red Flag' symptoms. See NHS choices for further information.
Conjunctivitis e.g. Antimicrobial eye drops / ointment, chloramphenicol (patients \geq 2yrs), sodium cromoglicate eye drops, (Golden Eye [®] , Brolene [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Red Flag' symptoms. See NHS choices for further information.
Cough, colds, nasal congestion, allergic rhinitis and sinusitis e.g. cough mixtures / linctus, saline nasal drops / douches, decongestant nasal sprays, menthol vapour rubs, cold and flu capsules / sachets, (Lemsip [®] , Benylin [®] , Sudafed [®] , Beechams [®] , Benylin [®] , Vicks [®] , Sterimar [®] , NeilMed [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Red Flag' symptoms. See NHS choices for further information (cough, cold, decongestants, allergic rhinitis, sinusitis)
Cradle cap (Seborrhoeic dermatitis) – infants e.g. emulsifying ointment, shampoos, baby oils, (Capasal [®] shampoo, Dentinox [®] shampoo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If causing distress to the infant and not improving.
Haemorrhoids e.g. zinc oxide ointments, creams, suppositories, (Anusol [®] , Germoloids [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Red Flag' symptoms. See NHS choices for further information.
Infant colic e.g. gripe water, simethicone drops, lactase drops (Infacol [®] , Colief [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Red Flag' symptoms. See NHS choices for further information.
Mild cystitis e.g. potassium citrate, sodium citrate, sodium bicarbonate sachets / mix, (Cymaclear [®] liquid, Cystopurin [®] sachets)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Red Flag' symptoms. See NHS choices for further information.
Molluscum contagiosum e.g. potassium hydroxide, (Molludab [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Red Flag' symptoms. See NHS choices for further information.



Minor conditions suitable for self-care - a prescription for treatment of these conditions should not routinely be offered in primary care, as the condition is appropriate for self-care.

Mild irritant dermatitis e.g. emollients, steroid (allergy / itch) relief cream, hydrocortisone cream / ointment, (ExoCream [®] , Eurax [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Dandruff e.g. antidandruff / antifungal shampoos, coal tar shampoo, ketoconazole shampoo (Alphosyl [®] , Capasa [®] , T-Gel [®] , Nizoral [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Diarrhoea (adults only) e.g. loperamide, rehydration sachets, (Imodium [®] , Dioralyte [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Dry eyes / sore tired eyes e.g. lubricating eye drops, artificial tears, hypromellose, carbomer eye drops, (GelTears [®] , Optrex [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Earwax e.g. olive / almond oil, hydrogen peroxide, sodium bicarbonate ear drops, (Earex [®] , Otex [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Excessive sweating (hyperhidrosis) e.g. antiperspirants, aluminium chloride sprays / roll-ons / solutions, (Driclor [®] , Anhydrol Forte [®] , Zeasorb [®] powder)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Head lice e.g. dimeticone lotions / creams, nit combs, (Lyclear [®] , Permethrin [®] , Hedrin [®] , Derbac-M [®] , Full Marks [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Indigestion and heartburn e.g. antacid tablets / liquid, peppermint oil capsules, sodium alginate, calcium carbonate, potassium bicarbonate, sodium bicarbonate liquid, OTC PPIs (Gaviscon [®] , Peptac [®] , Rennie [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Infant formula (except for pre-term, CMPA and where a dietitian has recommended) e.g. lactose free, pre-thickened, thickening, soya formula, (SMA LF [®] , Aptamil [®] Lactose Free, SMA Staydown [®] , Cow & Gate Anti-Reflux [®] , SMA Wysoy [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. N.B. All formulas suitable from birth and based on cow's milk protein can be purchased using Healthy Start Vouchers.
Infrequent constipation e.g. laxative tablets / liquid / suppositories / granuals, bisacodyl, docusate, senna, lactulose, (Fybogel [®] , Ex-Lax [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Infrequent migraine e.g. migraine tablets, anti-sickness tablets, (Buccastem M [®] , Migralve [®] , Imigran [®] Recovery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Insect bites and stings e.g. steroid and anti-itch creams, calamine lotion, insect repellent, (Anthisan [®] cream)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.



Minor conditions suitable for self-care - a prescription for treatment of these conditions should not routinely be offered in primary care, as the condition is appropriate for self-care.

<p>Mild Acne e.g. Benzoyl peroxide cream / gel / wash, salicylic acid products, (Freederm[®], PanOxyl[®])</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
<p>Mild dry skin e.g. emollients, moisturising cream / gels / ointments / bath additives / shower gels, (E45[®], Aveeno[®], Oilatum[®], Elena's[®])</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
<p>Sunburn due to excessive sun exposure e.g. after sun, aloe vera gel, (Soleve[®] sunburn relief cutaneous emulsion)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
<p>Sun protection e.g. sunscreen cream / lotion / spray / lip balm, (Anthelios[®], Sunsense[®], Uvistat[®])</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACBS approved indication of photodermatoses (i.e. where skin protection should be prescribed) See general exceptions.
<p>Mild to moderate hay fever / seasonal rhinitis e.g. antihistamine tablets / eye drops / liquid, steroid nasal sprays, cetirizine, chlorphenamine, loratadine, sodium cromoglicate (Beconase[®], Benadryl[®], Clarityn[®], Opticrom[®], Piriton[®])</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. general exceptions.
<p>Minor burns and scalds e.g. antiseptic and cooling burns gels / creams, (Germolene[®], Savlon[®])</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions. However, more serious burns always require professional medical attention. Burns requiring hospital A&E treatment include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all chemical and electrical burns; large or deep burns; burns that cause white or charred skin; burns on the face, hands, arms, feet, legs or genitals that cause blisters.
<p>Minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and / fever e.g. pain relief tablets / liquid, paracetamol, ibuprofen, aspirin topical anti-inflammatory / rubefacient gels / creams, (Panadol[®], Nurofen[®], Anadin[®], Ibuleve[®], Deep Heat[®])</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
<p>Mouth ulcers e.g. antimicrobial mouthwash, chlorhexidine, hydrogen peroxide mouthwash, (Corsodyl[®], Bonjela[®] gel, Orabase[®] paste)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
<p>Nappy rash e.g. nappy rash creams, zinc & castor cream / ointment, (Bepanthen[®], Conotrane[®], Drapolene[®], Metanium[®], Sudocrem[®])</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.



Minor conditions suitable for self-care - a prescription for treatment of these conditions should not routinely be offered in primary care, as the condition is appropriate for self-care.

Oral thrush e.g. Miconazole oromucosal gel, (Daktarin [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Prevention of dental caries e.g. fluoride toothpastes, mouthwashes, (Biotene [®] , BioXtra [®] , Corsodyl [®] , Fluorigard [®] , Ultradex [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Ringworm / athletes foot e.g. antifungal creams / powders / sprays, (Canesten [®] , Daktarin [®] , Lamisil [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lymphoedema or history of lower limb cellulitis. See general exceptions.
Teething / mild toothache e.g. antiseptic pain relieving gel, benzocaine gel, clove oil, (Bonjela [®] teething gel, Dentinox [®] , Orajel [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Threadworms e.g. Mebendazole tablets / suspension, (Ovex [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Travel sickness e.g. Cinnarizine tablets, hyoscine hydrobromide, (Joy-Rides [®] , Kwells [®] , Stugeron [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Warts and verrucae e.g. Salicylic acid paint / gel / creams / plasters, dimethyl ether propane cold spray, (Bazuka [®] , Cuplex [®] , Salactol [®] , Wartex [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified. See general exceptions.
Weight loss treatments e.g. orlistat, diet pills, fat binders, (Alli [®] , XLS-medical [®])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No routine exceptions have been identified.

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.

Patient queries or complaints

Any patient queries or complaints should be directed 01273 238 700 or BHCCG.complaints@nhs.net



Appendix 1

General exceptions to the guidance. Specific exceptions are noted in the table above.

There are however, certain scenarios where patients should continue to have their treatments prescribed and these 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).
- 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. immunosuppressed patients).
- Patients on prescription only treatments.
- 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 does not 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.
- 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.

Exceptional or rare cases

- The CCG will always consider exceptional or rare cases where it is appropriate to do so. More information on the Individual Funding Request process can be found on the CCG IFR webpages here: [BHCCG](#) and [HWLH](#).

