

NHS England Guidance Over the counter items that should not be routinely prescribed


The Isle of Wight CCG is working with the communications team from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Partnership to support general practices to implement the NHS England Guidance relating to over the counter (OTC) medicines that should not be routinely prescribed.

The guidance from NHS England has been developed to raise general public awareness of the need to reduce the financial and workload burden of General Practices prescribing OTC items.

MOT ACTION PLAN – How can we help you?

Communication Action Plan

- **Prescriber Information** - Dr Adam Poole (CCG Prescribing Lead and PCPC Chair) has simplified the NHS England guidance to practices which is attached.
- **Patient Information** - The CSU Communications team have worked with us to develop a media release for television, radio, newspapers and social media.
- **Leaflets and posters** - sent to every pharmacy, general practice and the hospital.

-  the local minor ailments scheme, will support patients who don't pay for their prescriptions to access OTC items for minor, self-limiting (short-term) conditions free of charge from a pharmacy.

Prescriptions - either repeats or acute one-offs.

To address both of these methods of prescribing, we need two different actions:

1. Repeat Prescriptions - MOT Pharmacy Technician's Support for Practices

- The MOT pharmacy techs can identify and review patients and actively stop any repeat OTC meds that have not been issued in the last 3 months, and review those OTC meds that have.
- They will discuss individualised support with each practice and agree actions/letters/messages
- We have built SystemOne searches for OTC medicines on repeat and can identify
 - Repeat not ordered in last 3 months – stop and add message
 - Repeat ordered in last 3 months – review if using regularly (OK to continue for a long-term condition or discuss with practice re their own policy)

For example:

“Over the counter medicine stopped re guidance from NHS England. This medicine can be bought over-the-counter from pharmacies and supermarkets. People eligible for free prescriptions can use Pharmacy First. Any questions, please contact the IoW CGG 534769.”

2. Acute Prescriptions – Prevent future prescribing from starting

- Jo Bennett (PCPC committee member) will liaise with the Practice Managers Forum, with the aim of engaging the practice managers, as the receptionists are the front line to refer patients to the pharmacy when appropriate and avoid GP appointments to request a prescription for a minor ailment symptom that could be self-managed with an over the counter medicine.

IOW OTC Campaign Objectives

The overarching aim of this plan is to raise awareness with the public across Isle of Wight that GPs, nurses or pharmacists will not generally issue a prescription for OTC medicines for the treatment of a range of self-limiting, minor illnesses.

Instead, people are being advised that OTC medicines are available to buy directly in a pharmacy or supermarket without a prescription, or may be free of charge under the local Pharmacy First minor ailments scheme for people who do not pay for their prescriptions.

This campaign will use a range of communication opportunities to explain this important change to Island residents, who might start to find their doctor, nurse or pharmacist now redirecting them to a pharmacy or supermarket to buy their medication.

As there has already been some engagement with GPs, pharmacists and nursing representatives, this plan is mainly towards raising overall public awareness regardless of role. However, there may be specific messaging aimed at different audiences, and these will be crafted and tailored accordingly (depending on how the campaign lands; issues arising and themed feedback). We are liaising with all stakeholders as appropriate.

Key messages

- Medications for the treatment of a range of minor, self-limiting (short-term) conditions such as a sore throat, indigestion or fungal infections can be bought directly from a pharmacy or supermarket, without the need for a GP appointment or prescription
- By going to your pharmacy for health advice, you will get much quicker treatment for your illness and you will also free up appointments for other people with more serious illnesses to be seen by a GP
- Buying 'over the counter' medication helps free up much needed funding within the health care budget for new interventions which will potentially have a significant impact on the quality of life for island residents e.g. continuous glucose monitors, or brand new medicines approved by NICE.

We hope that you find the resources useful and we would like to hear from you regarding your successes and challenges.

We can share good ideas via the MOT newsletter and have a consistent approach to OTC prescribing across the island.

Over the counter prescribing

Keele Data: The table below contains a list of conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care, based on the guidance issued by NHS England. This includes items of limited clinical effectiveness, self-limiting conditions and minor conditions suitable for self-care. The drug presentations and OTC categories are sourced from epact2.

	Volume (Items)			Spend (NIC)		
	Last Year	This Year	Change %	Last Year	This Year	Change %
Acute Sore Throat	170	96	-43.5%	£1,067	£640	-40.0%
Cold Sores	64	58	-9.4%	£149	£135	-9.3%
Conjunctivitis	385	361	-6.2%	£600	£941	56.7%
Contact Dermatitis	207	192	-7.2%	£624	£659	5.6%
Coughs and colds and nasal congestion	494	366	-25.9%	£2,069	£1,552	-25.0%
Cradle Cap	207	177	-14.5%	£1,163	£1,051	-9.7%
Dandruff	91	51	-44.0%	£524	£335	-36.1%
Diarrhoea (Adults)	566	515	-9.0%	£2,892	£2,987	3.3%
Dry Eyes/Sore tired Eyes	2,860	2,916	2.0%	£18,614	£18,912	1.6%
Earwax	48	39	-18.8%	£126	£102	-19.2%
Excessive sweating (Hyperhidrosis)	10	8	-20.0%	£35	£25	-30.3%
Haemorrhoids	232	279	20.3%	£789	£865	9.6%
Head Lice	50	69	38.0%	£1,233	£858	-30.4%
Indigestion and Heartburn	1,412	1,307	-7.4%	£8,502	£9,281	9.2%
Infant Colic	3	6	100.0%	£22	£78	252.4%
Infrequent Constipation	679	641	-5.6%	£2,459	£2,521	2.5%
Infrequent Migraine	155	86	-44.5%	£1,501	£827	-44.9%
Insect bites and stings	72	72	0.0%	£202	£207	2.4%
Mild Acne	50	49	-2.0%	£442	£381	-13.9%
Mild Cystitis	7	3	-57.1%	£19	£7	-64.5%
Mild Dry Skin/Sunburn	1,611	1,425	-11.5%	£10,394	£9,029	-13.1%
Mild to Mod Hay fever/Allergic Rhinitis	6,802	5,673	-16.6%	£17,208	£16,006	-7.0%
Minor burns and scalds	3	2	-33.3%	£11	£7	-39.1%
Minor conditions (pain/discomfort/fever)	3,331	3,111	-6.6%	£11,150	£12,006	7.7%
Mouth ulcers	58	34	-41.4%	£932	£652	-30.0%
Nappy Rash	389	245	-37.0%	£1,216	£808	-33.6%
Oral Thrush	109	80	-26.6%	£481	£358	-25.6%
Prevention of dental caries	71	34	-52.1%	£336	£129	-61.4%
Probiotics	20	19	-5.0%	£814	£889	9.3%
Ringworm/Athletes foot	888	853	-3.9%	£1,987	£2,002	0.8%
Sunscreens	36	22	-38.9%	£621	£334	-46.2%
Teething/Mild toothache	1	0	-100.0%	£3	£0	-100.0%
Threadworms	26	22	-15.4%	£38	£26	-32.1%
Travel Sickness	538	689	28.1%	£6,192	£4,691	-24.2%
Vitamins and minerals	7,287	7,448	2.2%	£52,169	£45,881	-12.1%
Warts and Verrucae	93	63	-32.3%	£352	£216	-38.5%
Total	29,025	27,011	-6.9%	£146,936	£135,396	-7.9%

Data shown is year to date (Apr-19 to Sep-19).

This is compared against the same time period last year (Apr-18 to Sep-18).

Interestingly, the Keele data shows us a rise in the increase of prescribing of OTC medicines for the prevention of travel sickness and the treatment of head-lice which could be easily bought from a pharmacy or supermarket.