**Commissioning statement**

**Prescribing of medicines available to purchase over the counter for self-care**

**NHS Humber, Coast and Vale Integrated Care System (ICS) do not routinely support the prescribing of medicines and treatments for self-limiting and minor health conditions where:**

* **Self-care is the most appropriate route**
* **Medicines and treatments are available to buy over the counter**

All prescribers within, Humber, Coast and Vale including non-medical prescribers, GPs, extended hours, urgent care and A&E departments, should offer education and advice to support self-care when appropriate and not routinely prescribe readily available over the counter (OTC) medicines. This guidance does not remove the clinical discretion of the prescriber in accordance with their professional duties.

Community pharmacists should support this approach and not routinely advise patients to request their GP to prescribe OTC medicines available for self-limiting conditions and minor health conditions where these are available to purchase.

The following self-limiting and minor health conditions can often be treated effectively and safely using over the counter medicines. Treatments for these conditions are no longer routinely recommended on prescription.

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| * Acute sore throat * Conjunctivitis * Coughs and colds and nasal congestion * Cradle cap (Seborrhoeic dermatitis – infants) * Dandruff * Diarrhoea (adults) * Dry eyes/ sore tired eyes * Earwax * Excessive sweating (hyperhidrosis) * Haemorrhoids * Head lice * Indigestion and heartburn * Infant colic * Infrequent cold sores of the lip * Infrequent constipation * Infrequent migraine * Insect bites and stings * Mild acne * Mild cystitis | * Mild dry skin * Mild irritant dermatitis * Mild to moderate hay fever * Minor burns and scalds * Minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and/or fever (e.g. aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain) * Mouth ulcers * Nappy rash * Oral thrush * Prevention of dental caries * Ringworm/Athletes foot * Sun protection * Sunburn due to excessive sun exposure * Teething/mild toothache * Threadworms * Travel sickness * Warts and verrucae |

This guidance is **not** aimed at patients who require medicines for long term conditions e.g. a patient with rheumatoid arthritis who is prescribed regular paracetamol and any patient included in the general exceptions, listed below, which apply to all the conditions listed above **except** the items of limited clinical effectiveness1.

* Patients prescribed an OTC treatment for a long term condition e.g. regular pain relief for chronic arthritis or treatments for inflammatory bowel disease. This does not include long term conditions which are also classified as minor conditions e.g. mild to moderate hay fever.
* 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 prescribed OTC products to treat an adverse effect or symptom of a more complex illness and/or prescription only medications.
* Patients requiring treatments that are prescription only medicines.
* 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 breast-feeding. In addition, some indications may not allow OTC sale e.g. hydrocortisone cream applied to the face.
* 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 (including, but not limited to, children); particularly if there are concerns that treatment might otherwise not be provided.