

# Medicines for Self-Care

People should be encouraged to self-care for minor self-limiting, short-term conditions by purchasing certain medicines and keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home. Medicines required regularly for long-term conditions fall outside of this guidance. Licensing restrictions should always be considered when recommending patients to purchase items. The decision to prescribe over-the-counter (OTC) medicines sits with the individual prescriber. Under NHS regulations, prescribers should prescribe any medicines they feel are needed for a patient's medical care. A patient is entitled to a medicine that the prescriber believes is necessary, not those which the patient feels should be supplied on prescription<sup>1</sup>. Exemptions from prescription charges, including prepayment certificates, do not constitute exemptions to this guidance. Please note that sales of medicines to pregnant women are restricted within their product license and some items will need to be prescribed.

<u>Oral Medicines</u>	<u>Medicines Management Advice</u>	<u>Legal Sale Restrictions/ MHRA Product License Restrictions for general sale – if required for a condition outside of these license restrictions it must be prescribed (if applicable)</u>
<b>Painkillers for adults:</b> <b>Paracetamol</b> <b>Ibuprofen</b> <b>Aspirin 300mg</b> <b>Co-codamol 8/500mg</b>	Encourage patients to purchase and keep as part of a well-stocked medicine cabinet to manage short-term minor ailments (e.g. minor aches/pains; earache; headache/migraine; colds; fever; toothache; sore throat; musculoskeletal pain; sprains/strains; nasal congestion; recovery post-operation).	<b>Paracetamol and Aspirin 300mg:</b> 16 tablets can be purchased in supermarkets, and larger packs from pharmacies <b>Ibuprofen:</b> 16 x 200mg tablets can be purchased in supermarkets and larger packs from pharmacies <b>Co-codamol 8/500mg:</b> 32 tablets (max. 3 days' treatment) from pharmacies. Repeated requests will be referred to prescriber <b>Naproxen:</b> dysmenorrhoea in women aged 15-50. (Max 3 days treatment 9 x 250mg)
<b>Painkillers suspensions:</b> <b>e.g. Calpol®/Nurofen®</b>	Parents can buy to keep stock at home for when needed (e.g. teething, fever).	<b>Paracetamol and Ibuprofen:</b> Licensed post-immunisation from 2 months and for general use from 3 months
<b>Cough/Cold mixtures</b>	No clinical evidence of benefit but can be purchased.	Many remedies are unlicensed under 6 yrs. Some products are available for 6+ yrs. Information for parents available from <a href="http://child-cough.bristol.ac.uk/">http://child-cough.bristol.ac.uk/</a>
<b>Anti-diarrhoeals for Adults</b>	Can buy for acute episodes (less than 48 hours).	Can buy <b>loperamide</b> from supermarkets/pharmacies for 12+ yrs up to max 12mg/day. Oral rehydration sachets are available from pharmacies
<b>Laxatives for Adults</b>	Products can be purchased for when needed acutely. Provide dietary and lifestyle advice	<b>Laxatives</b> can be purchased for non-complicated, acute episodes of constipation.
<b>Threadworm tablets</b>	Can buy from the pharmacy	<b>Mebendazole</b> only available from pharmacies and for children 2+ years
<b>Indigestion remedies (e.g Gaviscon, ranitidine, omeprazole, pantoprazole)</b>	Patients can purchase when needed. <u>Short term</u> use only over the counter (2-4 weeks) before needs to be assessed.	<b>Ranitidine</b> 16 years+ only, <b>PPIs</b> 18 years+ only. <b>Gaviscon</b> (and other antacids) varies, see products for details. Patients over 50 years old with symptoms for the first time will be referred to GP. Pregnant women can purchase antacids as required but must be aware of salt content.
<b>Anti-histamines (e.g. cetirizine, loratadine, chlorphenamine, acrivastine)</b>	Only prescribe for diagnosed chronic rhinitis and urticaria, and for children under 1 yr due to age-restricted sales.	<b>Chlorphenamine</b> (Piriton) oral solution for 1+yr; <b>Loratadine</b> oral solution for 2+yr; <b>Cetirizine</b> oral solution (brands vary in min. age from between 2-6yrs). <b>Acrivastine</b> over 12 years only. Oral antihistamines cannot be sold to pregnant women.
<b>Colic treatment</b>	Infacol® and Colief® can be purchased OTC.	Licensed from birth. If symptoms are ongoing, advise patient to see GP
<b>Vitamins and tonics</b>	See BNSSG formulary for indications.	Can be purchased for non-formulary BNSSG indications.
<b>Vaginal Thrush Treatments (e.g. fluconazole 150mg capsules, clotrimazole cream or pessaries)</b>	Can be purchased in combination with external creams (Clotrimazole 1%/2% and 500mg pessaries)	Can be purchased from 16-60 years old who are not pregnant or breastfeeding, have been previously diagnosed with thrush and have had fewer than 2 episodes in the last 6 months. Pregnant women and over 60s must be referred to GP. Male partners can also be treated OTC.
<b>Oral thrush treatment</b>	Miconazole oral gel can be sold OTC	Must not be sold to patients taking warfarin or other coumarins due to potentially fatal interaction increasing INR
<b>Travel sickness treatments</b>	Hyoscine hydrobromide, promethazine, cinnarizine (oral) and hyoscine patches all available OTC	Different age restrictions for different products; refer to pharmacy. Minimum age generally 4-5 years

1. British Medical Association/General Practitioners Committee. Prescribing in general practice [Online]. 2013 May. Available from: <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/gp-practices/service-provision/prescribing/prescribing-and-dispensing>

<u>Eye, ear, nose and throat</u>	<u>Medicines Management Advice</u>	<u>Legal Sale Restrictions/ MHRA Product License Restrictions for general sale – if required for a condition outside of these license restrictions it must be prescribed (if applicable)</u>
<b>Bacterial conjunctivitis</b>	<b>Chloramphenicol 0.5% eye drops</b> and <b>1% eye ointment</b> can be purchased for adults and children over 2 following a review with the pharmacist	Patients with glaucoma should be referred to GP. Contact lens wearers should seek advice from optometrist or GP before treating
<b>Corticosteroid nasal sprays</b>	Corticosteroid nasal sprays are available over the counter for the treatment of seasonal allergic rhinitis for up to three months	<b>Beclometasone</b> 50mcg, <b>fluticasone propionate</b> 50mcg and <b>mometasone*</b> 0.05% available OTC for adults aged over 18 years (*soon to be available OTC, age restrictions likely same)
<b>Antihistamine eye drops for hayfever</b>	Eye drops available OTC contain <b>sodium cromoglicate</b> 2%, an antihistamine and/or a decongestant	Different products have different restrictions. <b>Sodium cromoglicate</b> can generally be purchased for use over the age of 6 years
<b>Decongestant nasal sprays and tablets</b>	Patient can purchase as part of self-care management.	Nasal sprays can be sold for 12+yrs for 1 week. <b>Phenylephrine</b> and <b>pseudoephedrine</b> tablets can both be sold for 12+yrs for 1 week (see BNF contra-indications). If long term issues, see GP
<b>Lozenges/oral sprays/mouthwash/teething gels</b>	Patient can purchase as part of self-care management.	Various different products with different licensing restrictions
<b>Ear wax drops</b>	Patients can buy <b>olive oil</b> drops or other OTC products.	All ear wax removal products are available to buy.
<u>Bandages/Appliances and external medicines</u>	<u>Medicines Management Advice</u>	<u>Legal Sale Restrictions/ MHRA Product License Restrictions for general sale – if required for a condition outside of these license restrictions it must be prescribed (if applicable)</u>
<b>Topical analgesics, e.g ibuprofen gel, diclofenac gel, rubefacients (e.g. Deep Heat)</b>	Patients can purchase these products for short-term use if required. If indicated for a chronic condition these should be prescribed. Rubefacients should not be prescribed	<b>Diclofenac</b> – OTC treatment limited to 7 days (14 for 12 hour gel), can only be used for 14 years and over <b>Ibuprofen</b> - most products age limit of 12 years, some 14 years.
<b>Fungal nail treatments</b>	These have a low cure rate and can be purchased OTC. Various different products exist	<b>Amorolfine</b> -containing products may be purchased from pharmacies for the treatment of up to two nails for adults >18 years
<b>Haemorrhoid treatments, e.g Anusol, Germoloids, Preparation H (available as creams/ ointments/ suppositories)</b>	Treatments for simple haemorrhoids including astringents are available from pharmacies. Some products also contain hydrocortisone or local anaesthetics	<b>Hydrocortisone</b> -containing products are restricted to adults over 18. Most treatments for haemorrhoids only recommended over 18 years
<b>Barrier Creams, Calamine Lotion; Antiseptic Creams, Plasters, Anti-fungal creams/powders</b>	These can be bought easily in supermarkets and pharmacies as part of self-care management for minor fungal infections or cuts/grazes to skin.	Pharmacist can advise about product choice. Calamine lotion can be purchased OTC for chickenpox
<b>Elasticated Supports for minor sprains (e.g. Tubigrip®); joint supports.</b>	Can be purchased over-the-counter relatively cheaply as part of self-care management.	Various sizes/brands can be purchased from pharmacies.
<b>Emollients and bath/shower products</b>	Prescribe emollients only for dermatitis, eczema and psoriasis. Bath additives are non-formulary.	Patient can purchase as part of self-care management.
<b>Head lice treatment</b>	Recommend wet combing. Various products available from pharmacies.	Alcohol-based products are not recommended for patients with asthma/sensitive skin. <b>Dimethicone</b> licensed from 6 months
<b>Minor acne treatment</b>	Can buy wide range from supermarket/pharmacy.	Creams and washes are available. <b>Benzoyl peroxide</b> ages 12+
<b>Aciclovir cream for cold sores</b>	These can be bought easily in supermarkets and pharmacies.	Prescribe for immunocompromised patients, the terminally ill, and children <12 years.
<b>Warts/verrucae</b>	Can purchase. Prescribe in sexual health/ GUM and diabetes.	Sales licensed only for use on hands and feet