

Self Care Commissioning Policy

September 2018

This policy applies to patients for whom the following Clinical Commissioning Groups are responsible:

- NHS South Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- NHS Redditch & Bromsgrove Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- NHS Wyre Forest Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Collectively referred to as the Worcestershire CCGs

COMMISSIONING STATEMENT:

- The Worcestershire CCGs expect that patients with conditions appropriate for self-care will purchase their own medication from general retailers (for General Sales List medicines) or over-the-counter from community pharmacies.
- All prescribers within all providers in the Worcestershire CCGs area, including non-medical prescribers, GPs, out-of-hours, A&E departments, and minor injury units should review their prescribing practice to ensure that patients with a condition appropriate for self-care are advised to purchase their own treatment rather than be provided with a prescription.
- This policy applies to:
 - All patients registered with a Worcestershire GP or attending a healthcare appointment in Worcestershire.
 - All patients, whether or not they pay for their prescriptions. **Exemption from prescription charges does not exempt an individual from self care for minor conditions.**

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Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment	

Key individuals consulted in developing this document

Name	Designation
CCG Medicines Commissioning Team	
Worcestershire Local Medical Committee	

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This policy is based on the previous self-care policy but updated in line with NHSE guidance on over the counter medicines which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care.

1. Definitions

- 1.1 Policy: A policy is a plan of action which is then applied as concrete programmes and actions. Policy documents will be prescriptive by nature and will detail expectations for the actions of individuals in a particular subject area, setting the parameters within which to operate.
- 1.2 OTC: Over the counter medicine is a general term encompassing medicines that are available without a prescription. They may be Pharmacy Only (P) or General Sales List (GSL).
- 1.3 Self-management/ Self care: term used to include all the actions taken by people to recognise, treat and manage their own health. They may do this independently or in partnership with the healthcare system.

2. Scope of policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all services contracted by or delivered by the NHS in Worcestershire including:
 - GP practices
 - Out of hours and extended hours providers
 - Acute Hospitals
 - Outpatient clinics
 - NHS community providers
 - Independent providers
 - Community pharmacies
- 2.2 This policy applies to all prescribers within the contracted services; general practitioners, locum and junior doctors, trainees and community practitioners, supplementary and independent non-medical prescribers within Worcestershire.
- 2.3 This policy applies to:
 - 2.3.1 All patients registered with or attending a healthcare appointment in Worcestershire.
 - 2.3.2 All patients, whether or not they pay for their prescriptions. **Exemption from prescription charges does not exempt an individual from self care for minor conditions.**
- 2.4 General Exceptions to the policy:
 - 2.4.1 Patients prescribed an OTC treatment for a long term condition for example regular pain relief for chronic arthritis or treatments for inflammatory bowel disease.
 - 2.4.2 Treatment of more complex forms of minor illnesses, for example severe migraine unresponsive to over the counter medicines.
 - 2.4.3 Where the symptoms suggest that the condition is not minor or where there are 'red flag' symptoms for example indigestion with very bad pain.
 - 2.4.4 Treatment for complex patients for example immunocompromised patients.
 - 2.4.5 Patients prescribed an OTC product to treat an adverse effect or symptom of a more complex illness and /or prescription only medicine, for example constipation from opioid analgesics. Patients should have these products prescribed on the NHS.

- 2.4.6 Circumstances where the product license does not allow the product to be sold over the counter for specific indications or patient groups. See: [Restrictions to over the counter prescribing](#).
 - 2.4.7 Patients with a minor condition suitable for self-care that has not responded to treatment with an OTC product.
 - 2.4.8 Individual patients where the clinician considers 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 well-being could be adversely affected** if it relies on self-care.
 - 2.4.9 Circumstances where the prescriber believes that in their clinical judgement, exceptional circumstances exist that warrant deviation from this policy.
- 2.5 This policy also applies to care home residents; however individual care home and/or patient decisions may need to be made depending on the condition and circumstances. Patients, who are able, should be encouraged to self-care with purchased medicines for appropriate conditions.

3. Background¹

- 3.1 Self care is defined by the Department of Health as a part of daily living and includes the actions people take for themselves, their children and their families to stay fit and maintain good physical and mental health.
- 3.2 Currently around 20% of a GP's time and 40% of their total consultations are used for minor ailments and common conditions at a cost on average of £2 billion per year to the NHS.
- 3.3 There is growing evidence to show that supporting self-care improves symptom management, general health, quality of life and patient satisfaction.
- 3.4 Self-care impacts the use of services by decreasing primary care consultations, visits to outpatients, A&E attendances, use of hospital resources and admittance in to secondary care.
- 3.5 By educating patients about self-care and providing support materials, demand on GP's time could be reduced, allowing more time for treating patients with complex health problems and long term chronic illnesses.

4. Relevant National Guidance and Facts

- 4.1 Guidance from NHSE and NHS Clinical Commissioners² highlighted that the NHS in the year to June 2017, spent approximately £569 million on prescriptions for medicines that can be purchased over the counter (OTC) for conditions which are self-limiting or can be self-managed without having to seek medical advice.
- 4.2 57 million GP consultations every year are for minor ailments that could be self-treated at home. This takes on average, one hour per day of GP's time and costs the NHS £2 billion per year.¹
- 4.3 Additionally, minor illness and injuries account for approximately three quarters of A&E attendances of which 15% have the potential to be treated with self-care at home.¹

- 4.4 Information is available to support patients with self-care from organisations such as the Self Care Forum and NHS Choices as well advice from community pharmacies.

5. Equality Statement

- 5.1 All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to set out arrangements to assess and consult on how their policies and functions impact on race equality. This obligation has been increased to include equality and human rights with regard to disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and religion.
- 5.2 South Worcestershire, Redditch and Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest CCGs endeavour to challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and aim to design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, and population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.
- 5.3 All staff are expected to deliver services and provide care in a manner which respects the individuality of patients and their Carer's and as such treat them and members of the workforce respectfully, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion/belief, disability and sexual orientation.
- 5.4 Providers and Commissioners are expected to use the appropriate interpreting, translating or preferred method of communication for those who have language and/or other communication needs. Practitioners will need to assess that prescribing practice is fair and equitable for all groups covered under the Equality Act 2010 and that they are implementing the Accessible Information Standard.

6. Minor Conditions

The minor conditions included in this policy are either:

- Self-limiting and do not require medical advice or treatment as they will clear up on their own (Appendix One) or
- A minor condition that is suitable for self-care and treatment with items that can be easily purchased over the counter. (Appendix Two).

7. References

1. Prescqiipp briefing document. Self care for minor ailments. January 2015
Accessed at: <https://www.prescqiipp.info/resources/send/141-self-care-webkit/1748-t8-self-care-for-minor-ailments>
2. NHSE & NHS Clinical Commissioners. Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs. March 2018. Accessed at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-guidance-for-ccgs/>

8. Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact and Risk Assessment has been completed for this project. Please click on the following icon for the document



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care policy v2.docx



Appendix One: Self-limiting conditions that do not require medical advice or treatment

Condition	Rationale	Exceptions	References
Acute sore throat	Sore throat due to bacterial or viral cause is self-limiting and symptoms will resolve within 3 days in 40% and within 1 week in 85% of people.	Red flag symptoms	NHS Choices: Sore Throat NICE CKS: Sore Throat Acute
Infrequent cold sores of the lip	Cold sores caused by the herpes simplex virus usually clear up without treatment within 7 to 10 days. Antiviral creams are available to purchase over the counter and if used correctly can ease the symptoms and speed up the healing time.	Immunocompromised patients Red flag symptoms	NHS Choices: Cold sore NICE CKS: Herpes Simplex Oral
Conjunctivitis	Symptoms usually clear within a week. There are various treatments that can be purchased over the counter. Public Health England advises that children with infective conjunctivitis do not need to be excluded from school, nursery or child minders	Red flag symptoms	NHS Choices: Conjunctivitis NICE CKS: Conjunctivitis-infective Public Health England: Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings
Coughs, colds and nasal congestion	Most colds start to improve in 7 to 10 days. Most coughs clear up within two to three weeks. Both conditions can cause nasal congestion. Neither condition requires any treatment.	Red flag symptoms	NHS Choices: Common cold NHS Choices: Cough NICE CKS: Common cold
Cradle Cap (seborrhoeic dermatitis- infants)	Cradle cap is harmless and does not usually itch or cause discomfort. It usually appears in babies in the first two months of their lives, and clears up without treatment within weeks to a few months.	If causing distress to the infant and not improving	NHS Choices: Cradle cap NICE CKS: Seborrhoeic dermatitis
Haemorrhoids	Haemorrhoids often clear up by themselves after a few days. Making simple dietary changes and not straining on the toilet can be recommended first. Creams, ointments and suppositories can reduce itching and discomfort and are available to purchase.	Red flag symptoms	NHS Choices: Haemorrhoids NICE CKS: Haemorrhoids
Infant Colic	Although there are some over-the-counter treatments available there is limited evidence for the effectiveness of these treatments. Colic eventually improves on its own.	Red flag symptoms	NHS Choices: Colic NICE CKS: Colic
Mild Cystitis	Mild cystitis is a common type of urinary tract	Red flag symptoms	NHS Choices: Cystitis

	<p>inflammation, normally caused by an infection. Mild cases will often get better in a few days with symptomatic treatment with paracetamol and/ or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) drug. If symptoms do not improve in 3 days patients should be advised to see their GP. Symptomatic treatment using products that reduce the acidity of the urine to reduce symptoms are available, but there is a lack of evidence of effectiveness.</p>		<p>NICE CKS: Urinary tract infection (lower) - women</p>
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Appendix Two: Minor conditions appropriate for self-care

<p>Mild Irritant Dermatitis</p>	<p>Irritant dermatitis is a type of eczema triggered by contact with a particular substance. Once treated, symptoms improve and/or clear up completely if the irritant or allergen can be identified and removed or avoided. (Common irritants include soaps, washing powders, detergents, solvents or regular contact with water.) Treatment involves avoiding the allergen or irritant and treating symptoms with over the counter emollients and topical corticosteroids.</p>	<p>No routine exceptions</p>	<p>NHS Choices: Contact dermatitis NICE CKS: Dermatitis-contact</p>
<p>Dandruff</p>	<p>Dandruff can be defined as mild scaling of the scalp without itching and can be easily treated with over the counter anti-fungal shampoos.</p>	<p>No routine exceptions</p>	<p>NHS Choices: Dandruff NICE CKS: Seborrhoeic dermatitis – scalp and beard</p>
<p>Diarrhoea (Adults)</p>	<p>Acute diarrhoea is usually caused by an infection (bacterial or viral), drugs, anxiety or a food allergy. It can take a few days to a week to clear up. OTC treatments can help replace lost fluids or reduce bowel motions. This recommendation does not apply to children.</p>	<p>No routine exceptions</p>	<p>NHS Choices: Diarrhoea NICE CKS: Diarrhoea – adult's assessment</p>
<p>Dry Eyes/Sore (tired) Eyes</p>	<p>Dry eye syndrome, or dry eye disease, is a common condition that occurs when the eyes don't make enough tears, or the tears evaporate too quickly. Most cases of sore tired eyes resolve themselves. Mild to moderate cases of dry eye syndrome or sore tired eyes could be managed by implementing self-</p>	<p>No routine exceptions</p>	<p>NHS Choices: Dry eye syndrome NICE CKS: Dry eye syndrome</p>

	care measures such as good eyelid hygiene and avoidance of environmental factors alongside lubricant eye treatments that consist of a range of drops, gels and ointments that can be easily purchased over the counter.		
Earwax	A build-up of earwax is a common problem that can be treated using eardrops bought from a pharmacy. These can help soften the earwax so that it falls out naturally.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Earwax build-up NICE CKS: Earwax
Excessive sweating (Hyperhidrosis)	Hyperhidrosis is a common condition in which a person sweats excessively. First line treatment involves simple lifestyle changes. Stronger antiperspirants containing aluminium chloride are available in most pharmacies.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Hyperhidrosis NICE CKS: Hyperhidrosis
Head Lice	Head lice are a common problem, particularly in school children aged 4-11. Live head lice can be treated by wet combing; chemical treatment is only recommended in exceptional circumstances and in these cases over the counter medicines can be purchased from a pharmacy. If appropriate everyone in the household needs to be treated at the same time - even if they don't have symptoms.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Head Lice and nits NICE CKS: Head Lice
Indigestion and Heartburn	Most people have indigestion at some point and it is usually not a sign of anything more serious. It can be treated at home without the need for medical advice, by making simple diet, lifestyle changes, and avoiding foods that make indigestion worse. (e.g. rich spicy or fatty foods, caffeinated drinks) or taking medication such as antacids that can be bought over the counter.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Indigestion NICE CKS: Dyspepsia – proven functional
Infrequent Constipation	Short term constipation can affect people of all ages and can be effectively managed with a change in diet or lifestyle. Pharmacists can suggest an over the counter laxative if diet and lifestyle changes aren't helping, but they should only be used for a short time. Laxatives are not recommended for children unless they are prescribed by a GP.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Constipation NICE CKS: Constipation

	This guidance applies to short term, infrequent constipation caused by changes in lifestyle or diet such as lack of water or movement or changes in diet.		
Infrequent Migraine	Migraine is a common health condition, affecting around one in every five women and around one in every 15 men. Mild infrequent migraines can be treated with over the counter pain killers. Those with severe or recurrent migraines should continue to seek advice from their GP.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Migraine NICE CKS: Migraine
Insect bites and stings	Most insect bites and stings are not serious and will get better within a few hours or days. Over-the-counter treatments can help ease symptoms, such as painkillers, creams for itching and antihistamines.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Insect bites and stings NICE CKS: Insect bites and stings
Mild Acne	Acne is a common skin condition that can be controlled with treatment. Patients should be encouraged to manage mild acne with long term use of over the counter creams, lotions or gels which are available over the counter. Treatments can take up to three months to work.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Acne NICE CKS: Acne Vulgaris
Mild Dry Skin	Patients with mild dry skin can be successfully managed using over the counter emollients on a long term basis.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Emollients
Sunburn and sun protection	Sun burn symptoms can be self-managed or prevented from developing by using products that can easily be bought in a pharmacy or supermarket.	ACBS approved indication of photodermatoses (i.e. where skin protection should be prescribed)	NHS Choices: Sunburn PrescQIPP: Sunscreens
Mild to Moderate Hay fever/Seasonal Rhinitis	Hay fever is a common allergic condition that affects up to one in five people. Mild to moderate symptoms can be managed with an over the counter treatment. .	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Hay fever NICE CKS: Allergic rhinitis
Minor burns and scalds	Burns and scalds are damage to the skin caused by heat. Antiseptic creams and treatments for burns should be included in any products kept in a medicine cabinet at home. Burns requiring hospital A&E treatment include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all chemical and electrical burns 	Serious burns – see examples.	NHS Choices: Burns and scalds NICE CKS: Burns and scalds

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large or deep burns • burns that cause white or charred skin • burns on the face, hands, arms, feet, legs or genitals that cause blisters 		
Minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and/fever. (e.g. aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain)	<p>Patients should be encouraged to keep a small supply of OTC analgesics in their medicines cabinets so they are able to manage minor conditions at home without the need for a GP appointment.</p> <p>Examples of conditions where patients should be encouraged to self-care include: headache, colds, fever, earache, teething, period pain, cuts, self-limiting musculoskeletal pain, sprains and strains, bruising, toothache, sinusitis/nasal congestion, recovery after a simple medical procedure and sore throat.</p>	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Your medicine cabinet
Mouth ulcers	Mouth ulcers are common and most will clear up by themselves but OTC treatment can help to reduce swelling and ease any discomfort.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Mouth ulcers NICE CKS Aphthous ulcers
Nappy Rash	Nappy rash can be treated at home using barrier creams purchased at the supermarket or pharmacy. It usually clears up after about three to seven days if recommended hygiene tips are followed.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Pregnancy and baby- Nappy Rash NICE CKS Nappy Rash
Oral Thrush	Oral Thrush is common in babies and older people with dentures or those using steroid inhalers. It can be treated with over the counter gel. .	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Oral thrush NICE CKS: Candida oral
Prevention of dental caries	Higher-strength fluoride toothpastes are sometimes advised for patients particularly at risk of tooth decay. Some higher fluoride toothpastes (~1500 ppm) and mouthwashes can be purchased over the counter.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Tooth decay PrescQIPP: Dental products on FP10
Ringworm/Athletes foot	<p>Ringworm is a common fungal infection that can cause a red or silvery ring-like rash on the skin. Athlete's foot is a rash caused by a fungus that usually appears between the toes.</p> <p>These fungal infections, medically known as "tinea", are not serious and are usually easily treated with over the counter treatments. However, they are contagious and easily spread so it is important to practice good foot hygiene.</p>	Lymphoedema or history of lower limb cellulitis.	NHS Choices: Ringworm NHS Choices: Athlete's foot NICE CKS: Fungal skin infections- foot
Teething/Mild toothache	Teething in babies is normal and self-limiting.	No routine exceptions	NHS Choices: Toothache

	<p>Teething gels may help to numb any pain or discomfort and can be purchased. If a baby is in pain or has a mild raised temperature (less than 38C) then paracetamol or ibuprofen suspension can be given.</p> <p>Toothache can come and go or be constant. Mild toothache in adults can also be treated with over the counter painkillers whilst awaiting a dental appointment for further investigation.</p>		<p>NICE CKS: Teething</p>
Threadworms	<p>Threadworms (pinworms) are tiny worms in stools and are common in children, spreading easily. They can be effectively treated without the need to visit the GP.</p> <p>Treatment is a chewable tablet or liquid and both can be purchased. Everyone in the household will require treatment, even if they don't have symptoms. Strict hygiene measures can also help clear up a threadworm infection and reduce the likelihood of reinfection.</p>		<p>NHS Choices: Threadworms NICE CKS: Threadworm</p>
Travel Sickness	<p>Mild motion sickness can be treated by various self-care measures (e.g. stare at a fixed object, fresh air, listen to music etc.); more severe motion sickness can be treated with over the counter medicines.</p>	No routine exceptions	<p>NHS Choices: Motion sickness</p>
Warts and Verrucae	<p>Most people will have warts at some point in their life. They are generally harmless and tend to go away on their own eventually.</p> <p>Several treatments can be purchased from a pharmacy to get rid of warts and verrucae although there is only limited evidence that they are effective. .</p>	No routine exceptions	<p>NHS Choices: Warts and verrucas NICE CKS: Warts and verrucae</p>