

Prescribing of Medicines that are Available for Purchase (Self-Care)

Funding of medicines available to purchase to treat self-limiting conditions and minor ailments and self-care is a personal responsibility.

It is expected that patients will purchase such medicines (see overleaf for examples and table), after seeking appropriate advice if required, from a healthcare professional.

All patients, regardless of where they live, should be able to access and purchase such medicines.

There is a range of resources for advice on medicines use, e.g. community pharmacists, NHS 111, NHS Choices, which can be used to enable self-care before seeking advice from a GP or a Nurse.

Individuals are expected, where possible, to try to alter their diet and lifestyle if it is probable that this is the cause of a minor health problem, e.g. dyspepsia.

Medicines can be purchased over the counter (OTC) from community pharmacies and/or supermarkets (GSL products). These often have extended opening times therefore allowing rapid access and early treatment, rather than delaying treatment by attending a GP appointment for a prescription. The range of medicines available increases regularly and a community pharmacist would be best placed to give advice on the most appropriate product to use. Many minor ailments are not of a serious nature and will resolve within a short time-frame without the need for treatment. Please note that there may be restrictions on certain products that community pharmacists can sell over the counter or for certain patient groups, dependent on the licensed status of the product (please refer to the table for further information).

Community pharmacists are able to advise and signpost patients in situations where they should seek medical advice.

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

If patients are regularly using OTC medicines for a long term condition e.g. regular full dose paracetamol for chronic pain, it would not be unreasonable to prescribe.

It is important to check that the OTC medicine is licensed for the indication that it is to be used for, otherwise requests for purchasing OTC medicines for unlicensed indications will be refused by community pharmacies.

Position Statement No.	28
Title	Prescribing of Medicines that are Available for Purchase (Self-Care)
References	N/A
Acknowledgements	Mid Essex CCG
Version	2
Author	Medicines Management Team
Approved by	Basildon and Brentwood CCG: Prescribing Subgroup, Patient Quality and Safety Committee, Board Thurrock CCG: Medicines Management and Safety Group, Patient Quality and Safety Committee, Transformation and Sustainability Committee, Board
Date Approved	May 2019
Review Date	May 2021

Medications for minor ailments and self-limiting conditions which should be purchased - seek advice from community pharmacists (list not exhaustive)

- Pain killers for acute minor aches and pains including migraine and minor temperature e.g. Calpol. Please also refer to the 'Good Practice Guidance for Paracetamol Prescribing'.
- Treatment of coughs and colds including cough syrup, nasal drops and inhalations.
- Treating one-off/non serious constipation and/or diarrhoea.
- Treatments for haemorrhoids.
- Hayfever preparations for the treatment of seasonal allergic symptoms (antihistamines, nasal sprays and eye drops).
- Allergy preparations for non-serious stings and insect bites and eye drops for allergies.
- Eye drops for minor eye infections and dry eye conditions.
- Treatment for occurrences of head-lice or scabies infestation, including lotions and shampoos.
- Treatment of occasional bouts of dyspepsia.
- Treatment of oral or vaginal thrush.
- Treatment of cystitis.
- Antiperspirants.
- Athlete's foot cream and powders.
- Topical fungal nail treatments.
- Barrier creams for nappy rash.
- Creams or gels for:
 - dry skin conditions
 - female facial hair removal
 - minor acne
 - sprains and sports injuries
 - bruising, scars, tattoos and varicose veins.
 - minor abrasions or irritated skin – (antiseptic creams)
 - sunscreens – unless prescribing in accordance with the policy on sunscreens
- Tubigrip/plasters/bandages for sprains and sports injuries
- Ear wax removers and softeners
- Dietetic products e.g. gluten free foods (in line with local guidance), sip feeds/oral nutritional supplements (unless meets ACBS criteria), infant soya formula, anti-reflux formula and lactose free formula.
- Toiletries.
- Lozenges, throat sprays, mouthwashes, toothpastes and gargles.
- Moisturisers and bath additives for minor dry skin conditions.
- Slimming preparations other than those restricted to prescription only.
- Threadworm and roundworm tablets.
- Tonics, vitamins (in line with local guidance), health supplements and complementary medicines.
- Travel medicines e.g. for travel sickness and some vaccines (in line with local guidance).

Common medications available to purchase over the counter (OTC) for minor ailments (not to be prescribed)

Minor Ailment	Medication	Example brands	OTC restrictions	Classification P (pharmacy only) GSL (general sale)
<p>Acute pain, headache, temperature</p> <p><i>Can be prescribed for: regular full dose paracetamol for chronic pain</i></p>	Paracetamol 500mg tablets	Anadin, Mandanol, Disprol, Panadol, Hedex	Long term conditions requiring regular pain relief	GSL (up to 32 tablets – packs of 16)
	Ibuprofen 200mg, 400mg Ibuprofen 100mg/5ml liquid	Anadin Ibuprofen, Nurofen, Calprofen, Cuprofen, Anadin Joint Pain,	Long term conditions requiring regular pain relief Asthma Unstable high blood pressure Taking anticoagulants Stomach ulcers/problems Children under 3 months Not for use in chickenpox	GSL (200mg up to 32 tablets – packs of 16) P (400mg – up to 32 tablets)
	Co-codamol 8/500mg	Migraleve Yellow tablets, Paracodol,	Children under 12 years Severe liver disease Breastfeeding Pregnancy	P (up to 32 tablets)
	Paracetamol 120mg/5ml suspension (from 3 months) Paracetamol 250mg/5ml suspension (from 6 years old)	Calpol, Medinol, Sootheze Six Plus,	Children under 2 months Babies born before 37 weeks Babies weighing less than 4 kg	GSL
	Ibuprofen 5% gel	Fenbid, Ibuleve, Nurofen,	Children under 14 years Pregnancy Breastfeeding Broken/infected skin Asthma	GSL

	Diclofenac 1.16% and 2.32% gel	Voltarol Emulgel P, Voltarol 12 Hour Emulgel P, Voltarol Extra Strength Emulgel P, Voltarol 12 Hour Joint Pain Relief		P
	Aspirin 75mg, 300mg dispersible tablets	Anadin Original, Disprin	Asthma Peptic ulceration Third trimester pregnancy Children under 16 years Haemophilia Current anticoagulant therapy	GSL (up to 32 tablets – packs of 16) P (other pack sizes)
Hayfever and allergies <i>Can be prescribed for: severe chronic allergic conditions</i>	Chlorphenamine 4mg tablets	Allercalm Allergy Relief, Piriton, Hayleve	Children under 12 years Pregnancy Breastfeeding	P
	Chlorphenamine 2mg/5ml solution	Allerief, Piriton	Children under 1 year Children with Asthma Children taking monoamine oxidase inhibitors	P
	Loratadine 10mg tablets	Clarityn Allergy, Clarityn Rapide Allergy	Children under 12 years Pregnancy Breastfeeding	GSL (pack size 10 tablets) P (other pack sizes)
	Acrivastine 8mg capsules	Benadryl Allergy Relief, Benadryl Plus,	Children under 12 years Adults over 65 years Pregnancy Breastfeeding	GSL (pack size 12 tablets) P (other pack sizes)
	Cetirizine 10mg tablets	Benadryl Allergy One A Day, Zirtek Allergy Relief, Pollenshield Hayfever, Piriteze Allergy tablets	Children under 12 years Patients with kidney problems Pregnancy Breastfeeding	GSL (pack size 14 tablets) GSL (pack size 70ml) P (other pack sizes)

	Cetirizine 1mg/ml solution	Benadryl For Children Allergy Solution, Zirtek Allergy Relief For Children, Piriteze Allergy Syrup Benadryl Allergy Oral Syrup, Zirtek Allergy Relief	Children under 6 years Children under 2 years	
	Beclometasone 0.05% nasal spray	Beconase Hayfever, Beconase Hayfever Relief, Nasobec	Children under 18 years	GSL (100 spray pack) P(180 spray pack)
	Sodium cromoglycate 2% eye drops	Allercrom, Optrex Allergy, Catacrom Allergy Relief, Opticrom Hayfever, Cromolux Hayfever	Children under 6 years	GSL
Athlete's foot	Miconazole 2% cream Miconazole 0.16% spray powder	Daktarin/Daktarin Aktiv cream, Daktarin Aktiv spray powder	Diabetic patients Pregnancy Breastfeeding Spray-not to be used in children	P (cream) GSL (powder)
	Terbinafine hydrochloride 1%	Lamisil Once solution, Lamisil AT cream/gel/spray, Scholl Advanced, Athlete's Foot cream	Children under 18 years Children under 16 years Diabetic patients Pregnancy Breastfeeding	GSL
Cold sores	Aciclovir cream 5%	Zovirax Cold Sore cream, Cymex Ultra cream, Virasorb Cold Sore cream	Children under 12 years For use in adults only Immunocompromised and terminally ill Only for face and lips	GSL (only if specified for cold sore)

Conjunctivitis (uncomplicated/bacterial)	Chloramphenical 0.5% eye drops Chloramphenical 1% eye ointment	Brochlor eye ointment, Golden Eye Antibiotic eye drops and eye ointment, Optrex Infected eye drops and ointment	Children under 2 years Pregnancy Breastfeeding Caution with contact lens wearers	P
Cystitis	Sodium citrate 4g sachet	Cystocalm, Cymalon, Canesten Oasis,	Men and children under 16 years Diabetic patients Heart disease, hypertension, renal disease Pregnancy Breastfeeding	GSL
	Potassium citrate 1.5g liquid Potassium citrate 3g sachet	Cymaclear, Cymalon Cranberry liquid, Cystopurin	Men and children under 6 years History of kidney disease Pregnancy Breastfeeding	GSL
Diarrhoea	Oral rehydration solutions/sachets	Dioralyte and Dioralyte Relief sachets	Patients with liver or kidney disease Patients on low potassium/sodium diets Patients with diabetes	GSL
	Loperamide 2mg capsules and tablets	Imodium, Diocalm Ultra, Diah-limit	Children under 12 years Inflammatory bowel disease Post bowel surgery Post pelvic radiation Colorectal cancer	GSL (pack size 6 capsules) P (other pack sizes)
Ear wax	Olive oil drops Arachis oil/chlorobutanol hemihydrate drops Docusate sodium 0.5% drops Acetic Acid 2% Urea hydrogen peroxide 5%	Cerumol Olive Oil, Cerumol, Waxsol, EarCalm, Otex	No restrictions Cerumol-peanut allergy EarCalm-under 12 years	GSL (Olive oil) P (all other ear drops/sprays)

Head lice <i>(consider use of wet/detection combing in combination with product use)</i>	Dimeticone gel, lotion or spray 4%	Hedrin, Lyclear, Nitrid	Babies under 6 months	GSL (100ml pack) P (other pack size)
	Malathion Aqueous lotion 0.5%	Derbac-M		GSL
	Permethrin 1% creme rinse	Lyclear Creme Rinse		P
Haemorrhoids	Zinc oxide	Anusol cream and ointment	Children under 16 years Breastfeeding Rectal bleeding or blood in stools Pregnancy (for hydrocortisone containing products)	GSL
	Zinc oxide and lidoxcaine	Germoloids cream, ointment and suppositories		P
	Zinc oxide and hydrocortisone	Anusol Plus HC ointment and suppositories, Germoloids HC Spray		P GSL
Indigestion, dyspepsia heartburn, upset stomach	Sodium alginate Calcium carbonate Sodium bicarbonate	Gaviscon Double Action tablets and liquid, Gaviscon Cool liquid	Children under 12 years Children under 6 years	GSL
	Sodium alginate Potassium bicarbonate	Gaviscon Advance tablets and liquid	Children under 12 years	P
	Magnesium carbonate heavy Calcium carbonate	Rennie tablets	Children under 12 years	GSL
	Bismuth subsalicylate	Pepto-Bismol tablets and liquid	Children under 16 years Aspirin hypersensitivity	P
	Esomeprazole 20mg tablets	Nexium Control tablets and capsules	Children under 18 years Adults over 55 years new or recently changes symptoms Pregnancy Breastfeeding Jaundice or liver disease	GSL (pack size 14 tablets)
	Pantoprazole 20mg tablets	Pantoloc Control tablets	Children under 18 years Adults over 55 years new or recently changes symptoms Pregnancy Breastfeeding Jaundice or liver disease	P

	Ranitidine 75mg tablets	Zantac tablets, Zantac Relief tablets, Gavilast tablets, Ranicalm tablets	Children under 16 years Peptic ulceration Elderly taking NSAIDs	P GSL (pack size 12 tablets)
Infant colic	Simeticone 40mg/ml oral suspension	Infacol	No restrictions	GSL
	Dimeticone 42mg/5ml	Dentinox Infant colic drops	Fructose, glucose-galactose or sucrose intolerant patients (contains sucrose)	GSL
Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) <i>(for short term use, for mild occasional symptoms of IBS once other causes have been explored and eliminated. Patients should be counselled to seek further medical advice if symptoms not improving)</i>	Hyoscine butylbromide 10mg tablets	Buscopan IBS Relief, Buscopan Cramps tablets	Children under 12 years Children under 6 years Myasthenia gravis Narrow angle glaucoma Megacolon Pregnancy Breastfeeding	GSL P
	Mebeverine hydrochloride 135mg tablets	Colofac IBS tablets	Children under 18 years Pregnancy Breastfeeding	P
	Peppermint oil 0.2ml	Colpermin IBS Relief capsules	Children under 15 years Peanut allergy Pregnancy Breastfeeding	GSL
Nail infections	Amorolfine 5%	Loceryl Curanail Medicated Nail Lacquer	Children under 18 years For the treatment of a maximum of two nails Diabetic patients Impaired peripheral blood circulation Pregnancy Breastfeeding	P
Nappy rash	Titanium dioxide, titanium peroxide, titanium salicylate	Metanium Nappy Rash ointment	No restrictions	GSL
	Zinc oxide, benzyl alcohol, benzyl benzoate, lanolin	Sudocrem Antiseptic Healing cream	No restrictions	GSL

	Clotrimazole 1 % cream	Canesten Cream Care Clotrimazole Cream	No restrictions	P
Nasal congestion	Sodium chloride 0.9% nasal drops, spray	Snufflebabe nasal drops and spray, Calpol Soothe, Care saline nasal drops and spray	No restrictions	GSL
Oral thrush	Miconazole 2% oral gel (15g)	Daktarin Sugar Free 2% Oral Gel	Children under 4 months Liver dysfunction Pregnancy and breastfeeding Interacting drugs including warfarin	P
Scabies	Permethrin 5% dermal cream	Lyclear Dermal cream	Babies under 2 months	P
	Malathion 0.5% liquid	Derbac M liquid	Babies under 6 months	P
Teething, sore mouth conditions <i>(Chronic and recurrent ulcers may require further investigation, and provision of prescription in certain circumstances)</i>	Choline salicylate and cetalkonium chloride	Bonjela, Bonjela Cool Mint Gel	Children under 16 years Active peptic ulceration Hypersensitivity to salicylates Pregnancy and breastfeeding	GSL
	Benzocaine	Orajel Dental Gel, Mouth Gel and Extra Strength	Children under 12 years Pregnancy and breastfeeding	
	Lidocaine hydrochloride, chlorocresol and cetylpyridinium chloride	Anbesol Liquid and Teething Gel, Anbesol Adult Strength	Pregnancy and breastfeeding Children under 12 years	
	Lidocaine hydrochloride and cetalkonium chloride	Bonjela Teething Gel, Bongela Junior Gel, Calgel Teething Gel	Babies under 2 months Babies under 3 months Heart disease, liver disease	GSL
Threadworms	Mebendazole 100mg tablets	Ovex (only P licensed brand)	Children under 2 years Pregnancy Breastfeeding	P

Sore throat	Benzydamine hydrochloride 0.15%	Difflam Spray, Difflam Oral Rinse, Difflam Sore Throat Rinse	Children under 6 years Children under 12 years Pregnancy Breastfeeding	P
	Benzamine 0.71%	Ultra Chloraseptic Anaesthetic Throat Spray	Children under 6 years Pregnancy Breastfeeding	GSL
	Tyrothricin and benzocaine	Tyrozets	Children under 3 years Pregnancy Breastfeeding	P
Skin complaints <i>(mild dermatitis, dry skin with no clinical indication-please refer to local emollient formulary and guidance for further information)</i>	Clobetasone butyrate 0.05% cream	Eumovate Eczema and Dermatitis Cream	Children under 12 years Broken or inflamed skin Pregnancy Breastfeeding	P (maximum duration of up to 7 days, and not for use on the face, toes and groin)
	Crotamiton 10% Crotamiton 10% and hydrocortisone 0.25%	Eurax Cream, Eurax HC Cream	Children under 3 years Children under 10 years Broken or inflamed skin Pregnancy Breastfeeding	GSL (Eurax) P (Eurax HC)- (maximum duration of up to 7 days)
	Urea 5% and lauromacrogals 3% Urea 10% and lactic acid 5%	E45 Itch Relief Cream Balneum Plus Cream Calmurid Cream	Broken or inflamed skin Pregnancy Breastfeeding	GSL P GSL
	Zinc oxide and calamine	Calamine Lotion	No restrictions	GSL
	Emollients		Hypersensitivity to any of the active ingredients or excipients	GSL or P (depending on product or pack size)

<p>Vaginal thrush (Please note that these products cannot be sold over the counter for first episode/undiagnosed vaginal thrush, or if the patient has had more than 2 episodes in the last 6 months)</p>	Clotrimazole 1% cream Clotrimazole 2% cream	Canesten Cream, Care Clotrimazole Cream, Canesten Thrush Cream	<i>Restrictions for use in vaginal thrush</i> Children under 16 years Adults over 65 years Pregnancy	P
	Clotrimazole 500mg pessary	Canesten Thrush Pessary-500mg	Children under 16 years Adults over 60 years Pregnancy	GSL
	Clotrimazole 10% vaginal cream and clotrimazole 2% cream	Canesten Thrush Combi Internal and External Creams	Children under 16 years Adults over 60 years Pregnancy	GSL
	Clotrimazole 500mg pessary and clotrimazole 2% cream	Canesten Combi Pessary and External Cream, Canesten Combi Soft Gel Pessary and External Cream	Children under 16 years Adults over 65 years Pregnancy	GSL
	Fluconazole 150mg capsule and clotrimazole 2% cream	Canesten Thrush Duo Oral Capsules and External Cream	Lactose intolerance Pregnancy and breastfeeding Children under 16 years Adults over 60 years	P
	Fluconazole 150mg capsule	Canesten Thrush	Lactose intolerance Pregnancy and breastfeeding Children under 16 years Adults over 60 years	P
<p>Warts and verrucae</p>	Salicylic Acid 12% and lactic Acid 4%	Bazuka Gel, Bazuka Treatment Gel, Salactac Gel	Diabetic patients Impaired peripheral blood circulation Face, neck, ano-genital area Moles, birthmarks, hairy warts or skin lesions Broken skin (Children under 2 years for the Bazuka Treatment Gels only)	P (al products except Bazuka Treatment Gels-GSL)
	Salicylic acid 16.7% and lactic acid 16.7%	Salactol Paint		

	Salicylic Acid 26%	Bazuka Extra Strength Treatment Gel, Bazuka Extra Strength Gel, Occlusal		
	Salicylic Acid 50%	Verrugon ointment (for plantar warts only)	Restrictions as above Please note for treatment of plantar warts only	P
	Dimethyl ether, propane and isobutane Dimethyl ether, propane	Scholl Freeze, Bazuka Sub-Zero	Children under 4 years Diabetic patients Face, neck, ano-genital area Moles, birthmarks, hairy warts or skin lesions Broken skin Pregnancy and breastfeeding	GSL