

Position Statement: Prescribing of Medications Available to Purchase over the counter

National Policy does not support the routine prescribing of medication that is available to buy from local pharmacies or supermarkets for children or adults.

The medications listed below are examples of medicines that should be purchased by the patient/parent/guardian.

This list is not exhaustive.

Shropshire CCGs believe 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, after seeking appropriate advice from a community pharmacist or other 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, 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 life-style 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. 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.
- 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.