

Self Care phase two: Frequently Asked Questions

What is happening?

Following on from the successful phase one consultation in 2015 about what people should buy to treat minor short term health problems, rather than being prescribed, we are now consulting about more medicines we think shouldn't be routinely prescribed by GPs and other health care professionals in Warrington.

We believe medicines included in the second phase of the consultation shouldn't be prescribed because:

- they are easily accessible to buy over the counter
- there is limited evidence of clinical benefit or cost effectiveness
- or there is no clinical need for treatment.

We are undertaking a formal 12 week consultation on the proposal of '*other than exceptional circumstance, medicines for minor health problems should be bought over the counter by patients INSTEAD of these medicines (outlined below) being routinely prescribed by GPs or other health care professionals in Warrington*'.

The consultation will run from Friday 22nd September until Friday 15th December 2017.

The medicines being considered under phase two of the project are:

Medicines that can be purchased over-the-counter for the treatment of minor or short-term conditions:

- Pain relief cream/ointment for short-term use
- Oral antihistamines for hay fever
- Decongestant nasal sprays and tablets
- Teething gels
- Vaginal moisturisers (for example lubricant gels and creams)
- Warts and verrucae paints
- Heparinoid gel/cream
- Antiperspirants
- Antifungal treatments (for example for athletes foot)
- Treatments for bites and stings
- Treatments for cold sores
- Antibacterial eye drops
- Treatment for diarrhoea
- Head lice treatments
- Treatments for infant colic

- Creams/ointments for nappy rash
- Threadworm treatments
- Vaginal thrush
- Haemorrhoids treatment

Medicines with limited clinical or cost-effectiveness:

- Cough preparations
- Eye care products (for example blepharitis wipes)
- Probiotics

Medicines used for conditions where there may be no clinical need to treat:

- Treatments for mild acne
- Dandruff and cradle cap treatments
- Baby milks (unless a clinical need for a specialist milk)

Why are we doing this?

Each year, we spend over a £1million on prescribing medicines that patients can buy over the counter for minor, short term health problems.

We feel this is money that could, and should, be spent on other vital treatments for local people and make better use of our precious NHS resources.

For example, did you know that:

- Last year, we spent over £8,000 on dandruff and cradle cap treatments
- Each GP consultation costs on average £36 and prescription costs are an additional £27 per consultation
- We could save over £5,000 per month by not prescribing tablets for hayfever

What local people have already told us?

From the first phase of our consultation last year on average 87% of people who took part said that it made sense not to prescribe items such as pain killers for minor aches and pains, or vitamins unless there is a clinical need.

Are there any exclusions as to what I can buy over the counter?

There are some exclusions as some medicines are only available in certain circumstances. For example, some medicines may not be suitable for children under two years of age. If you explain your circumstances to your local pharmacist, they will be able to offer further advice. If you are worried about your symptoms and you haven't seen an improvement after self-care at home, your GP practice is the right place to contact.

How can I get involved?

As part of the consultation we need your views on the proposals and to understand the impact they may have on you.

To give your views about what you think about the proposal you have a variety of opportunities to give your feedback:

- Online - by filling in the online survey by visiting <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SelfCarePhase2>
- Coming along to our public event to hear more about the proposals and to give your feedback on Thursday 9th November 10am, The Gateway, 89 Sankey Street, Warrington.

If people do not have access to the internet or need this leaflet in any other format, please contact the Engagement and Communications Team on 01925 843 745.

I currently don't pay for my prescriptions will I still be able to get the listed medications from my GP?

No, these medications will no longer be prescribed to any patient. Exceptional clinical need can be determined by your GP.

Are there any people who are exempt from this?

In exceptional circumstances, some groups of people may be exempt. Examples of exceptional circumstances may include the following:

- A homeless person who needs a medication for a short term ailment but who has no means of paying for over the counter medications
- A young unemployed person attends their GP practice and is given the option to buy medications themselves but the GP doesn't believe they have the money available to do so at this time
- A cancer patient has a minor ailment and is given the option to purchase remedies themselves but the GP doesn't believe they will and not having the medication will affect their general health and wellbeing
- If the GP believes that their patient who has a learning disability needs some medicine, but that they don't fully understand the option of going to purchase medication themselves then they can prescribe this for them

Other exemptions include:

- Antihistamines for patients who are suffering repetitive, debilitating symptoms

- Antibacterial eye drops for children under two years of age, or where a patient has pain, visual deterioration or contact lens use
- Treatment for infant colic for children where lactose intolerance is a longer term condition and it has been confirmed by testing
- Threadworm medications for pregnant or breastfeeding women or children under two years of age
- Vaginal thrush treatments for women, who have symptoms of thrush for the first time, are under 16 or over 60 years old, recurrent episodes of thrush (more than twice in six months), treatment hasn't worked, they are pregnant or breastfeeding, have a weakened immune system (for example due to HIV, chemotherapy or diabetes).

Where can I get the listed medications from if not from my GP?

Many of the medications are available from the high street, Pharmacists or from supermarkets and can often be bought for less than the cost of a prescription.

I am on a repeat prescription for some of these medications what will happen?

If the proposals are implemented speak to your GP about any impact for you if you have a repeat prescription. Some historic repeat prescriptions will need to be reviewed, not all current repeat medicines will be appropriate with the new guidance.

How will GPs be made aware of these changes if they are implemented?

All GPs will be informed through the CCG's existing communication channels about any changes brought about by this consultation.

How will the public be made aware of these changes if they are implemented?

A public awareness campaign will be planned, which will include information on self-care.

What do the GPs think about these proposed changes?

Part of this consultation will be to also seek the views of GPs and other health professionals

Can I still go and see my GP or nurse?

This project isn't about stopping you seeing your GP or Nurse. If you are worried about your symptoms and you haven't seen an improvement after self-care at home, your GP Practice is the right point of call.

This project is about being sensible with NHS resources - looking at what medicines have the best outcomes and what medicines people should buy over the counter rather than being prescribed routinely.