

# CCG Position Statement

## Self-Care Medication & Health Supplements

**NHS Lewisham CCG no longer supports the routine prescribing of medications for acute (short-term) illnesses, minor and/or self-limiting conditions; and health supplements, which could be bought cheaply over-the-counter (OTC)**

### Why are we doing this?

- To encourage and empower people to **self-care** for minor self-limiting conditions at home with support from community pharmacy therefore reducing reliance on prescribers for prescriptions.
- To **free up clinician consultation time** for people who have more complex healthcare needs and who need more active support in managing their health
- To **increase patient awareness** of preparations which are of low clinical effectiveness, where there is a lack of robust evidence of clinical effectiveness and/ or can be purchased over the counter easing pressure on NHS prescribing budgets.

Further information can be found on the NHS Lewisham CCG website > 'Who We Are' > 'Governing Body Papers' within the 'Patient and Public Consultation Report'.

**General Medical Council (May 2013) [Good practice in prescribing and managing medicines](#) and devices states the following:**

- 'Prescribing' is used to describe many related activities, including supply of prescription only medicines, prescribing medicines, devices and dressings on the NHS and advising patients on the purchase of over the counter medicines and other remedies
- If a patient asks for a treatment that the doctor considers would not be of overall benefit to them, the doctor should discuss the issues with the patient and explore the reasons for their request. If, after discussion, the doctor still considers that the treatment would not be of overall benefit to the patient, they do not have to provide the treatment. But they should explain their reasons to the patient, and explain any other options that are available, including the option to seek a second opinion.

### **What treatments and preparations for acute (short-term) illnesses, minor and/or self-limiting conditions are included and why?**

- Pharmacy Only (P) and General Sales Lists (GSL) treatments that can be purchased over the counter from a pharmacy with or without advice
- GSL treatments (including a patient information leaflet) that can be purchased from other retail outlets such as supermarkets, petrol stations, convenience and discount stores
- Treatments that are used to treat a condition that is considered to be self-limiting and so does not need treatment as it will heal/resolve by itself; and/or
- Treatments that are used to treat a condition which lends itself to self-care i.e. that the person suffering does not normally need to seek medical care and/or treatment for the condition
- Treatments that are often available to purchase over the counter at a lower cost than would be incurred by the NHS on a prescription

**Clinical judgement should always be used when considering whether it is acceptable to ask patients to purchase their medication (i.e. is it for a self-limiting condition, is the patient likely to obtain treatment or consider self-care)**

## Exclusions

- Medicines that can only be obtained with an NHS prescription, also known as Prescription Only Medicines (POM)
- Over the counter medicines used outside of their marketing authorisation, also known as “off-label use” or “unlicensed use”. For example use of chloramphenicol eye drops for longer than 5 days
- Where an over the counter medicine is being prescribed for a long-term (chronic) condition e.g. paracetamol regularly four times daily in osteoarthritis
- Where there are possible safeguarding concerns, including, but not limited to, children where there might be concerns that treatment might otherwise not be provided.

## Other Information

The Self-Care Forum has produced numerous resources that can be used, by healthcare professionals, to help support people to self-care. <http://www.selfcareforum.org/resources/>

## Guidance for patients, carers and guardians

- The NHS recommends everyone keeps a well-stocked medicine cabinet with self-care medicines. Further information can be found here: <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Pharmacy/Pages/Yourmedicinecabinet.aspx>
- Community pharmacists can offer advice on how to self-care, manage your acute (short-term) illnesses and minor/self-limiting conditions, when to seek medical advice, and what to take if you are on other medication. You do not need to make an appointment to see the pharmacist, can be seen in confidence in a private area and many pharmacies are open late nights and at the weekend when the doctor’s surgery is often closed.
- If your problem is more serious and needs the attention of another healthcare professional such as your GP, the pharmacist will advise you on this.
  - Advice is also available from:
    - NHS Lewisham CCG
    - NHS Choices (<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions>)
    - NHS 111
    - Self-Care Forum (<http://www.selfcareforum.org>)
    - Patient.co.uk (<http://www.patient.co.uk>)
    - Treat Yourself Better (<http://www.treatyourselfbetter.co.uk>)

## Comments or complaints

We do all we can to provide good quality health services, but sometimes things don’t go as they should. We welcome people telling us about how we can improve, or make a complaint about the service they have received from NHS Lewisham CCG.

We are also very pleased to receive positive feedback and compliments about our work or the quality of health services received as a local resident.

**Please Contact:**

**Tel:** 020 3049 3240

**Email:** LEWCCG.complaints@nhs.net

**Write to:** Cantilever House, Eltham Road, London, SE12 8RN