

Reducing prescribing of medicines and products that can be purchased without a prescription - medicines and products this recommendation refers to

	Indicative reasonable criteria for prescribing the medicine or product for people who are unable or unwilling to buy it include:	Notes
OTC acne treatment e.g. benzoyl peroxide	Acne	Non-treatment can lead to mental health problems
Antacids	When the alternative would be prescription of a more expensive or higher risk medicine	
Antifungal skin products	If the alternative would be antifungal tablets or capsules Immunosuppressed patients; when supervision of treatment is wise	
Antihistamines	Allergic rhinitis; urticaria; pruritus that responds to an antihistamine; angioedema	Treatment of urticaria often requires doses of antihistamine above OTC licensed doses.
Antiperspirants		
Artificial saliva	Dry mouth conditions; end of life	
Barrier creams	Stoma care; pressure areas; incontinence	
Bath additives		Other emollients are generally a better choice. Bath additives make the bath slippery.
Benzydamine mouthwash	Painful inflammatory conditions of oropharynx	
Chloramphenicol eye drops	Infections requiring treatment when simple non-pharmaceutical measures have failed to work	Can only be purchased for adults or children over 2 years
OTC cold sore treatment	Immunocompromised patients; terminally ill patients	
Colic treatment		NHS Choices advice: http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Colic/Pages/Introduction.aspx
Corticosteroid nasal sprays for hayfever	Allergic rhinitis	Beclometasone, budesonide, fluticasone and triamcinolone can be purchased OTC for up to 3 months' treatment of seasonal allergic rhinitis
Cough & cold remedies		
Covering cream or powder	Preparations marked 'ACBS' in the BNF are regarded as drugs when prescribed for postoperative scars and other deformities and as an adjunctive therapy in the relief of emotional disturbances due to disfiguring skin disease, such as vitiligo.	
Creams or suppositories for haemorrhoids		
Ear wax removers	Hearing loss due to hard ear wax	
Emollients	Eczema or psoriasis	Use of emollients can reduce the need for topical corticosteroids. Only use emollients on the NWL Integrated Formulary. Suitable quantities for adults for twice daily application for 1 week (BNF): face 15-30g; both hands 25-50g; both arms or legs 100-200g; trunk 400g
Gluten free foods	ACBS indications: established gluten-sensitive enteropathies including steatorrhoea due to gluten sensitivity, coeliac disease, and dermatitis herpetiformis. Only staple foods can be prescribed under ACBS rules: bread / rolls, breakfast cereals, crackers and crispbreads, flour / flour-type mixes, oats, pasta, pizza bases. Consider quantity being prescribed.	Major supermarkets and other retailers stock a wide range of gluten free foods which often cost less to purchase than the NHS pays.
OTC hair removal products		
Head lice treatment	Homeless people with severe head lice	For other patients encourage wet combing with a nit comb after application of conditioner

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Herbal and complementary supplements		
Laxatives	Chronic constipation; opioid induced constipation; children; pregnant women	
Loperamide for diarrhoea	Chronic diarrhoea; stoma patients	Loperamide can only be purchased over the counter for acute diarrhoea
Lubricant products for dry eyes	Severe untreated dry eye syndrome; Sjögren's syndrome	Severe untreated dry eye syndrome can damage the surface of the cornea (keratitis), making it vulnerable to potentially sight threatening ulceration and infection
Mouthwashes except benzydamine	Dentists may prescribe fluoride and antiseptic mouthwashes	
Oral rehydration solution sachets	In line with guidance from NICE	
Paracetamol, ibuprofen, co-codamol 8/500	Children with pyrexia (paracetamol or ibuprofen) Patients who need more tablets than can be purchased on one occasion (e.g. more than 32 paracetamol tablets)	16 paracetamol 500mg or ibuprofen 200mg tablets cost less than 50p in supermarkets
Prescribable shampoos	Severe seborrhoeic dermatitis	
Prescribable sun creams	Photoallergies or photosensitive diseases such as porphyria, lupus, Gunther's disease or chronic actinic dermatitis; DNA repair disease; skin cancer-prone genetic disorders such as xeroderma pigmentosum; patients on life-long immunosuppressive therapy, or who are treated long-term with a photosensitizing drug such as azathioprine; photosensitivity caused by other, unavoidable, treatment	It is also important for people with a history of skin cancer to use high factor sunscreen. Preparations with SPF less than 30 should not normally be prescribed.
Teething gels		
Threadworm tablets	Threadworm infections	All members of the family require treatment
Tonics		
Travel sickness tablets		
OTC wart and verruca treatments		People with diabetes, impaired peripheral blood circulation, facial or anogenital warts should not self-treat
Vitamins and mineral supplements	Clinically diagnosed deficiency Vitamin B for alcoholics Pregnant women (if they do not get Healthy Start vitamins) Malabsorption, e.g. in cystic fibrosis	

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