

NHS England Consultation: Conditions for which over the counter (OTC) items should not routinely be prescribed.

What is the consultation?

NHS England launched a public consultation on 20 December 2017 in relation to reducing prescribing of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines for minor, short-term health concerns which could save the NHS millions of pounds a year and encourage more people to self-care.

This follows a previous NHS England consultation (July - October 2017) which sought views generally on the principle of restricting the prescribing of medicines which are readily available over the counter.

It is important to note that the proposed guidance doesn't focus on individual products themselves; there may be cases where individual products are available but not in relation to the identified minor, short-term or self-limiting conditions (outlined below).

NHS England estimated that restricting prescribing for minor, short-term conditions may save up to £136m once all discounts and clawbacks have been accounted for.

Overall objectives

1. Prioritising limited NHS funding
2. Empowering people with the confidence and information to self-care appropriately
3. Reducing the level of unnecessary demand on general practice
4. Addressing increased costs to the NHS such as administration and dispensing
5. Having national support (from NHS England) for local decision making in this area

Proposals from NHS England to Clinical Commissioning Groups are based on;


1. Limited evidence of clinical effectiveness in relation to the specific condition
2. The condition is 'self-limiting' and will clear up on its own
3. The condition is appropriate for self-care

Exemptions that could apply;

- Following NICE guidance for appropriate treatment of individuals with Long Term Conditions,
- Treatment of complex forms of minor illnesses (that have been unresponsive to OTC products),
- Symptoms suggesting the condition is not minor (such as a cough for more than three weeks)
- Treatment for complex patients (such as immunosuppressed patients)
- If the product licence won't allow it to be sold OTC.

What are the 33 conditions for which routine prescribing could be restricted in primary care subject to the outcome of the consultation?

1	Acute sore Throat	12	Dry eyes / sore tired eyes	23	Minor burns and scalds
2	Cold sores	13	Earwax	24	Minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and / fever
3	Conjunctivitis	14	Excessive sweating	25	Mouth ulcers
4	Coughs and colds and nasal congestion	15	Head lice	26	Nappy rash
5	Cradle cap (seborrheic dermatitis – infants)	16	Indigestion and heartburn	27	Oral thrush
6	Haemorrhoids	17	Infrequent migraine	28	Prevention of dental caries
7	Infant colic	18	Infrequent constipation	29	Ringworm / athletes foot
8	Mild Cystitis	19	Insect bites and stings	30	Teething / Mild toothache
9	Contact dermatitis	20	Mild acne	31	Threadworm
10	Dandruff	21	Mild dry skin / sunburn	32	Travel sickness
11	Diarrhoea (adults)	22	Mild to moderate hay fever / allergic Rhinitis	33	Warts and verrucae

 = Self-limiting illness that will heal of its own accord

 = Minor illnesses suitable for self-care

Vitamins/minerals and probiotics have also been included in the consultation proposals as items of low clinical effectiveness which are of high cost to the NHS.

Where can I find out more about management of self-limiting conditions and self-care?

A wide range of information is available to the public on the subjects of health promotion and the management of minor self-treatable illnesses. Advice from organisations such as the [Self Care Forum](#) and [NHS Choices](#) is readily available on the internet. Many community pharmacies are also open extended hours including weekends and are ideally placed to offer advice on the management of minor ailments and lifestyle interventions. [The Royal Pharmaceutical Society](#) offers advice on over the counter products that should be kept in a medicine cabinet at home to help patients treat a range of self-treatable illnesses.

How can I get involved?

You can see the full consultation document by visiting:
https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/consultation/over-the-counter-items-not-routinely-prescribed/user_uploads/otc-guidance-2.pdf

You can respond to the consultation by using the online web-form:
<https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/consultation/over-the-counter-items-not-routinely-prescribed>.

Alternatively, written responses can be submitted to england.medicines@nhs.net.

When does the consultation close?

The NHS England national consultation will close on Wednesday 14 March 2018.