

Policy for conditions for which over the counter (OTC) items should not (routinely) be prescribed in primary care

This Self Care Policy has been developed to reflect the [NHS England guidance](#) published in March 2018 'Conditions for which over the counter medicines should not (routinely) be prescribed in primary care'.

NHSE concluded that by reducing spend on treating conditions that are self-limiting or which lend themselves to self-care or on items for which there is little evidence of clinical effectiveness, these resources can be used for other higher priority areas that have a greater impact on patients, support improvement in services and/or deliver transformation that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the NHS.

This policy covers 33 conditions (appendix 1), each condition/item has been assigned one of the following three recommendations by NHSE.

- The item should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care due to limited evidence of clinical effectiveness.
- A prescription for treatment of condition X should not be (routinely) offered in primary care as the condition is self-limiting and will clear up on its own without the need for treatment.
- A prescription for treatment of condition X should not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.

1.0 General Exceptions to the guidance

- Patients prescribed Over The Counter (OTC) treatment for a long-term condition (e.g. pain relief for chronic arthritis or treatments for inflammatory bowel disease.)
- For the treatment of more complex forms of minor illnesses (e.g. severe migraines that are unresponsive to over the counter medicines.)
- For those patients who have symptoms that suggest the condition is not minor (i.e. those with red flag symptoms for example indigestion with very bad pain).
- Treatment for complex patients (e.g. immunocompromised patients).
- Patients on prescription only treatments (where the OTC medicine cannot be sold for the indication it is to be used for).
- Patients prescribed OTC products to treat an adverse effect or symptom of a more complex illness and/or prescription only medication should continue to have these products prescribed on the NHS.
- Circumstances where the product license doesn't allow the product to be sold over the counter to certain groups of patients. This may vary by medicine, details have been included in this document under each relevant section.
- Patients with a minor condition suitable for self-care that has not responded sufficiently to treatment with an OTC product.

2.0 Items of limited clinical effectiveness

2.1 Probiotics

Recommendation	Probiotics should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care due to limited evidence of clinical effectiveness
Examples	Probiotics sachets, VSL# sachets
Exemptions	When prescribed as per ACBS criteria i.e. For use under the supervision of a physician for the maintenance of antibiotic induced remission of ileoanal pouchitis in adults.
OTC licensing restrictions	Some products are not suitable for children.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/probiotics/

2.2 Vitamins and Minerals – **see appendix 2 for detailed guidance on vitamin prescribing**

Recommendation	Vitamins and minerals should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care due to limited evidence of clinical effectiveness
Examples	Vitamin B compound tablets, vitamin C, cod liver oil, multivitamins, vitamin E, vitamin D (for maintenance)
Exemptions	<p>Medically diagnosed deficiency including patients who may have a lifelong or chronic condition or have undergone surgery that results in malabsorption. Continuing need should be reviewed on a regular basis.</p> <p>Maintenance or preventative treatment is NOT an exception</p> <p>Calcium and vitamin D for osteoporosis</p> <p>Severe malnutrition including alcoholism</p> <p>Bariatric surgery is NOT an exemption</p>
OTC licensing restrictions	The pharmacist will be able to advise on individual contra-indications for different products.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/

3.0 Self-Limiting Conditions

3.1 Acute sore throat

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of acute sore throat should not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is self-limiting and will clear up on its own without the need for treatment.
Examples	Antiseptic lozenges, throat sprays
Exemptions	Red flag symptoms
OTC licensing restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sore-throat/

3.2 Infrequent cold sores of the lip

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of cold sores should not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is self-limiting and will clear up on its own without the need for treatment.
Examples	Antiviral creams (aciclovir)
Exemptions	Immunocompromised patients Red flag symptoms
OTC licensing restrictions	Topical antiviral preparations cannot be sold for use anywhere other than the face/mouth (excluding the eye). Pregnancy and breast feeding
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cold-sores/

3.3 Conjunctivitis (bacterial, irritant or allergic)

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of conjunctivitis should not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is self-limiting and will clear up on its own without treatment.
Examples	Antibacterial drops/ointment Antihistamine eye drops
Exemptions	Red flag symptoms
OTC licensing restrictions	Chloramphenicol eyes drops/ointment cannot be sold for use in patients under 2 years old. Patient must be able to attend pharmacy for assessment. Sodium cromoglicate eye drops cannot be sold for use in patients under 6 years old. Usage limited to five days without further assessment.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/conjunctivitis/

3.4 Coughs and cold and nasal congestion

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of coughs, colds and nasal congestion should not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is self-limiting and will clear up on its own without treatment.
Examples	Cough mixtures, decongestant tablets and sprays, simple linctus, painkillers
Exemptions	Red flag symptoms
OTC licensing restrictions	<p>Pseudoephedrine cannot be sold to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 6 years • Children 6-12 years for more than 5 days • Pregnant women • Hypertensive patients <p>Paracetamol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be sold for use in infants under 3 months of age. (Can be sold for fever post vaccination from 2 months). • Restriction of 32 tablets unless pharmacist approves the sale of more, up to a maximum of 96. <p>Ibuprofen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be sold for use in pregnant patients • Cannot be sold for use in infants under 3 months of age

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot be sold for use in infants 3-6 months old who are under 5kg <p>Co-codamol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot be sold for use in children under 12 years Cannot be sold for use in pregnant or breast-feeding patients Cannot be sold for use in paediatric patients (0 – 18 years) who undergo tonsillectomy and/or adenoidectomy for obstructive sleep apnoea syndrome.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/common-cold/ https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cough/ https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/decongestants/

3.5 Cradle Cap

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of cradle cap should not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is self-limiting and will clear up on its own without treatment.
Examples	Emulsifying ointment, baby shampoo
Exemptions	If causing distress to the infant and not improving
OTC licensing restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cradle-cap/

3.6 Haemorrhoids

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of haemorrhoids should not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is self-limiting and will clear up on its own without treatment.
Examples	Haemorrhoid creams/ointments, suppositories
Exemptions	Red flag symptoms
OTC licensing restrictions	Children under 18 years Pregnant and breast-feeding patients
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/piles-haemorrhoids/

3.7 Infant Colic

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of infant colic should not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is self-limiting and will clear up on its own without the need for treatment.
Examples	Simethicone drops, lactase drops
Exemptions	Red flag symptoms
OTC licensing restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/colic/treatment/

3.8 Mild Cystitis

Recommendation	Prescription for symptomatic treatment of mild cystitis should not routinely be offered in primary care as the condition is self-limiting and will clear up on its own without the need for treatment.
Examples	Sodium bicarbonate or potassium bicarbonate granules
Exemptions	Red flag symptoms
OTC licensing restrictions	Pregnancy or breast feeding Hypertension, heart disease, kidney disease
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cystitis/

4.0 Minor Conditions Suitable for Self-Care

4.1 Mild Irritant dermatitis

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of contact dermatitis should not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Emollients, mild steroid creams
Exemptions	None have been identified See earlier for general exemptions
OTC licensing restrictions	Hydrocortisone 1% cream cannot be sold for use in children under 10 years old or for use on the face, eyes, ano-genital area, broken or infected skin. Usage limited to seven days without further assessment.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/contact-dermatitis/treatment/

4.2 Dandruff

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of dandruff should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Medicated shampoo
Exemptions	None have been identified See earlier for general exemptions
OTC licensing restrictions	Selenium and coal tar preparations cannot be sold OTC for pregnant and breast-feeding women.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dandruff/

4.3 Diarrhoea in adults

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of acute (short term) diarrhoea in adults should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Loperamide capsules, rehydration sachets
Exemptions	None have been identified See earlier for general exemptions
OTC licensing restrictions	Oral rehydration solutions and loperamide cannot be sold OTC for pregnant or breast-feeding women.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diarrhoea-and-vomiting/

4.4 Dry eyes/sore tired eyes

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of mild dry or sore/tired eyes should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Dry/tired eye drops
Exemptions	None have been identified See earlier for general exemptions
OTC licensing restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dry-eyes/

4.5 Earwax

Recommendation	Prescription for the removal of earwax should not be (routinely) offered in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Sodium bicarbonate ear drops, olive oil, almond oil, hydrogen peroxide drops
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/earwax-build-up/

4.6 Excessive sweating

Recommendation	Prescription for high strength antiperspirants for the treatment of mild to moderate hyperhidrosis should not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Aluminium chloride sprays/roll on
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/excessive-sweating-hyperhidrosis/

4.7 Indigestion and Heartburn

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of indigestion and heartburn should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Sodium alginate suspension, antacid tablets/suspensions, ranitidine, proton pump inhibitors
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions and be aware of red flag symptoms.
OTC licensing restrictions	Alginate raft forming suspensions cannot be sold OTC for children under 12 years. H2 receptor antagonists cannot be sold for children under 16 years.

	A number of antacids are available OTC for pregnant and breast feeding women, the pharmacist will be able to advise.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/indigestion/

4.8 Infrequent Short-Term Constipation

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of simple, short term constipation should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care. Most laxatives work within three days. This guidance applies to constipation caused by changes in lifestyle or diet such as lack of water or movement or changes by diet.
Examples	Bisacodyl tablets, ispaghula husk, lactulose, senna
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	Cannot be sold for regular use. Laxatives are not recommended for children unless they are prescribed by a GP. (Lactulose can be sold for use in babies upwards with suitable advice with no red flags present.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/constipation/

4.9 Infrequent Migraines

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of mild infrequent migraine should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Migraine tablets, pain killers
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	Only paracetamol can be sold OTC to pregnant women Only paracetamol or ibuprofen can be sold OTC for breast feeding women. Quantity restriction of 32 tablets for paracetamol unless approved by pharmacist (96). Preparations containing buclizine and codeine cannot be sold for children under 12 years.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/migraine/

5.0 Insect bites and stings

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of insect bites and stings should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Antihistamine cream/tablets, antiseptic cream, anti-itch cream
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	These medications cannot be sold for use in the following groups ; Acrivastine under 12 years Cetirizine tablets under 6 years however cetirizine 5mg/5ml liquid can be sold for use in age 2 upwards (Zirtek liquid). Loratadine under 2 years Chlorphenamine under 1 year Hydrocortisone cream 1% under 10 years, or for use on face, eyes or anogenital area. Crotamiton under 3 years Crotamiton with hydrocortisone under 10 years or for use on face, eyes or anogenital area. Pregnancy and breastfeeding
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/insect-bites-and-stings/

5.1 Mild Acne

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of mild acne should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Benzyl peroxide cream/gel, salicylic acid products
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	Pregnant and breast feeding patients
Patient friendly link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/acne/

5.2 Mild Dry Skin

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of mild dry skin should not (routinely) be prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Emollients
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/atopic-eczema/

5.3 Sunburn due to excessive sun exposure

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of sunburn should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Cooling creams
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sunburn/

5.4 Sun protection

Recommendation	Prescription for sun protection should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Sun cream/lotion, lip protection
Exemptions	If patient has ACBS approved indication of photodermatoses then it can be prescribed, must be one of the preparations in the Drug Tariff No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/sunscreen-and-sun-safety/

5.5 Mild to Moderate Hay Fever/Seasonal Rhinitis

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of mild to moderate hay fever should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Antihistamines, sodium cromoglicate eye drops, steroid nasal sprays
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	Steroid sprays cannot be sold for use in patients aged under 18 years old Sodium cromoglicate eye drops cannot be sold for use in patients under 6 years old Antihistamines cannot be sold for use in the following patient groups ; Acrivastine under 12 years and over 65 years Cetirizine tablets under 6 years Cetirizine liquid 5mg/5ml under 2 years Loratidine under 2 years Chlorphenamine under 1 year Beclomethasone and fluticasone nasal sprays under 18 years

	Pregnant and breastfeeding – hay fever preparations will need to be prescribed for this group of patients as they cannot be purchased for this group.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever/

5.6 Minor burns and scalds

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of minor burns and scalds should not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Antiseptic creams, cooling burns creams
Exemptions	No routine exceptions have been identified However more serious burns always require professional medical attention. Burns requiring hospital A+E treatment include but are not limited to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All chemical and electrical burns - Large or deep burns - Burns that cause white or charred skin - Burns on the face, hands, arms, feet, legs, genitals that cause blisters See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/burns-and-scalds/

5.7 Minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and/fever (aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain)

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and mild fever will not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Paracetamol, ibuprofen, co-codamol
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	<p>Paracetamol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be sold for use in infants under 3 months of age. Can be sold for post vaccination fever in babies from 2 months. • Restriction of 32 tablets unless pharmacist approves the sale of more, up to a maximum of 96. <p>Ibuprofen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be sold for use in pregnant patients • Cannot be sold for use in infants under 3 months of age • Cannot be sold for use in infants 3-6 months old who are under 5kg <p>Co-codamol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be sold for use in children under 12 years • Cannot be sold for use in pregnant or breast-feeding patients • Cannot be sold for use in paediatric patients (0 – 18 years) who undergo tonsillectomy and/or adenoidectomy for obstructive sleep apnoea syndrome.

Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/back-pain/ https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/period-pain/ https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sprains-and-strains/ https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/headaches/
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5.8 Mouth Ulcers

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of mouth ulcers will not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Anaesthetic gel, mouthwash
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC licensing restrictions	Bonjela gel not for under 16 years – prescribable but not for under 16 years. Bonjela junior gel cannot be sold for use in an infant under 3 months old. – only available OTC, not prescribable Iglu gel not for under 7 years – (only available OTC, not prescribable) Iglu rapid relief gel not for under 7 years – (only available OTC, not prescribable) Chlorhexidine mouthwash cannot be sold for use in children under 12 years.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mouth-ulcers/

5.9 Nappy Rash

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of nappy rash will not be (routinely) prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Barrier creams
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/nappy-rash/

6.0 Prevention of Dental Caries

Recommendation	Prescription for high strength fluoride toothpaste should not (routinely) be prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Fluoride toothpaste, mouthwash, oral drops
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions Higher strength fluoride toothpaste has to be prescribed – if this is needed it should be prescribed by a dentist. GP's should not be approached to prescribe dental treatments.
OTC restrictions	Patients who think they may need dental items should be signposted to see their Dentist for professional advice in the first instance.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tooth-decay/

6.1 Ringworm/Athletes Foot

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of ringworm or athletes foot will not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Antifungal creams/powder/sprays
Exemptions	Lymphoedema or lower limb cellulitis See earlier for general exceptions
OTC restrictions	Pregnancy and breast feeding Diabetic patients Terbinafine cannot be sold for use in children under 16 years.
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ringworm/ https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/athletes-foot/

6.2 Teething/mild toothache

Recommendation	Prescription for teething in babies or toothache in children and adults will not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Teething gels, pain killers
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/toothache/

6.3 Threadworms

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of threadworms will not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Mebendazole tablets
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC restrictions	Mebendazole cannot be sold for use in children under 2 years of age. Pregnancy and breast feeding
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/threadworms/

6.4 Travel Sickness

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of motion sickness will not (routinely) be offered in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Travel sickness tablets
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC restrictions	None
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/motion-sickness/

6.5 Warts and Verrucae

Recommendation	Prescription for treatment of warts and verrucae will not (routinely) be prescribed in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.
Examples	Salicylic acid topical paints, gels, medicated plasters Dimethyl ether propane cold spray
Exemptions	No routine exemptions identified See earlier for general exceptions
OTC restrictions	Cold sprays containing dimethyl ether propane cannot be sold OTC for; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warts and verrucae bigger than 7.5mm • Children under 4 years of age • Diabetic patients • Pregnant or breast feeding women <p>Salicylic acid containing topical preparations cannot be sold for use for;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diabetic patients or patients with impaired peripheral circulation • Use on face, neck, ano-genital area, moles, birthmarks, hairy warts, or any other lesion for which the wart is not indicated
Patient link	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/warts-and-verrucas/

Appendix 1

Condition	Examples Products Not for prescription
Probiotics	Probiotics sachets VSL# sachets
Vitamins and minerals	Vitamin B compound tablets, vitamin C, multivitamins, co enzyme Q10, vitamin D for maintenance
Acute sore throat	Lozenges, throat sprays
Cold sores	Antiviral (aciclovir) cold sore cream
Conjunctivitis	Antimicrobial (chloramphenicol) eye drops/ointment Sodium cromoglicate eye drops
Coughs and Colds and nasal congestion	Cough mixtures, simple linctus, saline nose drops, menthol vapour rubs Cold and flu capsules, ephedrine tablets/spray Pain killers
Cradle cap	Emulsifying ointment, shampoos
Haemorrhoids	Haemorrhoid creams/suppositories
Infant Colic	Simethicone suspensions Lactase drops
Mild Cystitis	Sodium bicarbonate or potassium citrate granules
Contact dermatitis	Emollients

	Steroid creams
Dandruff	Anti-dandruff shampoos Antifungal shampoos
Diarrhoea	Loperamide Rehydration sachets
Dry eyes	Eye drops for sore/tired eyes Hypromellose 0.3% eye drops
Earwax	Drops containing sodium bicarbonate, hydrogen peroxide, olive oil or almond oil
Excessive sweating	Aluminium chloride sprays, roll ons, solutions
Head lice	Permethrin, dimethicone creams, rinses, sprays, shampoos
Indigestion and heartburn	Anatacid tablets/liquid Ranitidine tablets Omeprazole capsules Sodium alginate, calcium carbonate or sodium bicarbonate liquids
Infrequent constipation	Bisacodyl tablets Fybogel sachets Senna tablets Lactulose
Infrequent migraines	Migraine tablets Pain killers
Insect bites and stings	Steroid creams Antihistamine creams
Mild acne	Benzoyl peroxide Salicylic acid
Mild dry skin	Emollient creams, ointments and lotions
Sunburn/sun protection	After sun cream Sun creams
Mild to moderate hay fever/seasonal rhinitis	Antihistamines Sodium cromoglicate Steroid nasal sprays (over 18 years)
Minor burns and scalds	Antiseptic burns cream Cooling burn gel
Minor condition associated with pain, discomfort and/fever.	Paracetamol Ibuprofen NSAID topical creams/gels Paracetamol suspension Ibuprofen suspension
Mouth ulcers	Local anaesthetic gels Antimicrobial mouthwash
Nappy rash	Nappy rash creams
Prevention of dental caries	Fluoride toothpaste Mouthwashes
Ringworm/athletes foot	Athletes foot cream Antifungal creams/sprays
Teething/mild toothache	Antiseptic pain relieving oral gel Clove oil Painkillers

Threadworms	Mebendazole 100mg tablets
Travel sickness tablets	Travel sickness tablets
Warts and verrucae	Salicylic acid creams/gels/plasters/

Appendix 2

Prescribing of Vitamins and Minerals in Primary Care

General principles:

Prescribing of vitamins and minerals is a low clinical priority and is only appropriate where there is an ACBS approved indication, i.e. only in the management of actual vitamin or mineral deficiency, and not as dietary supplements or as a general "pick-me-up".

Vitamins and minerals are essential nutrients which most people should get from eating a healthy, varied and balanced diet. Patients should be advised that this can be achieved by eating a balance of starchy foods (wholegrain where possible) with plenty of fruit and vegetables (at least five portions a day); some protein-rich foods; some milk and dairy foods; and not too much fat, salt or sugar. This will give them all the nutrients they need.

The [Eatwell plate](#) is a useful tool which can be used to show people how a healthy, varied and balanced diet can be achieved and what proportion of each food type should be consumed.

Recommendations:

- Vitamin and mineral preparations can be **purchased Over-the-Counter** with the support of community pharmacists. This should be first line before prescribing on FP10 is considered.
- **Review all patients prescribed vitamin and mineral preparations** and ensure that where a patient is unable or unwilling to self-care, any prescribing on FP10 is in-line with an ACBS approved indication, i.e. only in the management of actual vitamin or mineral deficiency / severe malnutrition. **Patients should be reviewed regularly for continued need.**
- **Discontinue prescribing of vitamins and minerals on FP10** for patients who are *not* being treated for the management of a diagnosed vitamin or mineral deficiency / severe malnutrition.
- Do not initiate new prescriptions for vitamin and mineral preparations unless they are for the management of actual vitamin or mineral deficiency in line with an ACBS approved indication.
- If patients still want to take vitamins and minerals for dietary supplementation or as a "pick-me-up" they should be advised that they should be purchased as **self-care Over-the-Counter** with the support of the community pharmacist. **FP10 prescribing is not recommended.**
- Some patients may be eligible for NHS Healthy Start vitamins which are specifically designed for pregnancy, breastfeeding and growing children. They are available free of charge from local distribution points – in Norfolk this is via [Community Pharmacies](#) only. More information is on the Healthy Start website: <http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/healthy-start-vitamins/>
- Vitamin and mineral supplementation (short course) associated with re-feeding will be prescribed by the specialist looking after the patient and should not be prescribed on FP10. Certain patients with malnutrition may also require vitamin and mineral supplementation. These patients are likely to be under specialist care. Malnutrition is not covered by this policy statement.

- Review all patients prescribed vitamin **B** preparations: thiamine (B₁), riboflavin (B₂), nicotinamide (B₃), pyridoxine (B₆), potassium benzoate (B₁₀) and complex preparations – see tables below. Ensure thiamine prescribing is appropriate (as per local guidelines / nutrition formulary) and there is ongoing need. There should be **no prescribing** of vitamin B Co or Co Strong in primary care. Any items on repeat should be stopped.
- Review all patients prescribed vitamin D (colecalciferol)** (*NB ergocalciferol is not recommended for use*) and ensure is for *treatment* of deficiency. *Prevention* of deficiency should be achieved through lifestyle changes or by purchasing vitamin D Over-the-Counter with the support of a community pharmacist. See local vitamin D prescribing guidance for [adults](#) and for [children](#).

Prescribing Recommendations for Vitamins, Minerals & Supplements

Do Not Prescribe on FP10:	
<i>Recommend lifestyle / diet changes or Self-Care over the counter with support of a community pharmacist</i>	
Abidec®:	See above recommendation regarding Healthy Start Vitamins
Antioxidants:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ocuvite PreserVision, ICAPS, Viteyes, etc</i> - on the basis of being unlicensed for use in AMD and there being no robust evidence for use in cataracts (TAG Double Red) <i>Co Enzyme Q10</i> - on the basis of there being no robust evidence for use (TAG Double Red)
Cod liver oil	Available Over-the-Counter
Dalivit®	See above recommendation regarding Healthy Start Vitamins
Evening Primrose Oil / gamolenic acid:	Blacklisted products - (TAG Double Red)
Folic acid supplements (400mcg):	For prevention of neural tube defects in pregnancy – available over the counter
General multivitamins	Any brands e.g. Centrum, Seven Seas products, Haliborange, own store brands
Glucosamine, Glucosamine & Chondroitin:	On the basis of NICE CG for osteoarthritis in adults states that these products are not recommended. Available to purchase without prescription at a 10th of the cost to the NHS. (TAG Double Red)
Homeopathic remedies:	TAG Double Red / Not recommended for NHS provision
Nicotinic acid (niacin) and derivatives (as above):	NICE <i>Do Not Do</i> (TAG Double Red)
Omega 3 fish oils including <i>Omacor®</i>	Patients should be encouraged to take healthy dietary measures to increase their intake of fish oils - (TAG Double Red)
Phlexy-Vits®	No requirement for use of specific multivitamins for people with PKU
Tonics	No evidence to support use on the NHS
Vitamin B complex	No evidence to support use on the NHS

Do Not Prescribe on FP10:	
<i>Recommend lifestyle / diet changes or Self-Care over the counter with support of a community pharmacist</i>	
formulations	
Vitamin B compound tablets and compound strong tablets	Used for only 10 days for re-feeding syndrome by secondary care
Vitamin B₁₀ / Potassium aminobenzoate (<i>Potaba</i> ®) capsules and powder):	Available to purchase Over-the-Counter (TAG Double Red)
Vitamin B₂ (Riboflavin):	Available in fortified foods
Vitamin B₃ (Vitamin PP) / Nicotinamide / Niacinamide:	Available Over-the-Counter
Vitamin B₆ (Pyridoxine)	Available Over-the-Counter
Vitamin B₁₂ (Oral - Cyanocobalamin)	Available Over-the-Counter
Vitamin C (Ascorbic acid):	Available Over-the-Counter
Vitamin H (Biotin):	Highly specialised use only (TAG Double Red)
<i>Any exceptions to this list, should be discussed with the CSU Medicines Optimisation Team</i>	

Acceptable to Prescribe on FP10:	
<i>Where available OTC, consider if patients are willing and able to self-care before prescribing on FP10</i>	
Vitamin B₁ (Thiamine):	Only as per local guidance / Nutrition Formulary
Vitamin B₁₂ (Hydroxocobalamin):	3-monthly injections for diagnosed pernicious anaemia
Vitamin D (Colecalciferol):	High dose to correct deficiency only, on acute prescription, as per local guidance – Adults / Children . Available Over-the-Counter for supplementation / maintenance.
Prescription only Vitamin D analogues i.e. alfacalcidol	Following specialist recommendation
Calcium +/- Vitamin D:	In line with national guidelines regarding prevention and treatment of osteoporosis and local Formulary (available Over-the-Counter)
Vitamin E:	Deficiency associated with cholestasis, severe liver disease, cystic fibrosis, abetalipoproteinaemia. Available Over-the-Counter for any other indication.
Vitamin K (phytomenadione / menadiol sodium phosphate):	Following specialist recommendation
Folic acid 5mg:	As per specialist recommendations for anaemias / prevention of methotrexate-induced folate deficiency
Iron salts for iron deficiency anaemia:	As per local Formulary (otherwise available Over-the-Counter)

<u>Forceval</u> [®]	For use in malnourishment only
<u>Ketovite</u> [®] tablets and liquid	Specialist recommendation only
<u>Renavit</u> [®]	For haemodialysis patients following specialist initiation / recommendation only