

# Medicines for Self-Care Educational Establishment Briefing

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## Background

In line with national guidance NHS Doncaster CCG supports individuals purchasing medicines and products from local pharmacies and shops for the treatment of minor ailments and self-limiting conditions as part of self-care. Many treatments for these areas are more expensive when they are provided on an NHS prescription compared to the purchase price from pharmacies and supermarkets.

Local pharmacies are ideally placed to support individuals with advice for the treatment of such conditions. There is no need for an appointment, they stock a wide range of inexpensive treatments, and many pharmacies are open long hours over seven days a week. As a result, prescribers are requested not to write a prescription for OTC treatments and products, except in the case of chronic conditions.

Self-care is extremely important to a person's health and wellbeing as it makes sure individuals have control over their health, improving quality of life and improving disease outcomes (1). Medicine for self-care is a central part of this approach, and many GP practices already encourage patients to take a personalised approach to keeping themselves healthy, including getting advice from the local Community Pharmacy.

Currently around 20% of GP time and 40% of their total consultations are used for these common minor conditions that could be treated without seeing a GP. Individuals that care for themselves have better health and reduced demand for services. This in turn allows more time for health professionals to see patients that require treatment for more complex conditions (1).

Individuals are expected to be responsible for their own health and the health of their families eg: patients are encouraged to make sure that they are prepared for most common winter ailments by keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home.

## Guidance Statement

As part of the national self-care approach, Doncaster CCG does not support the prescription of vitamins and minerals, medicines and treatments for minor or self-limiting conditions where:

- Self-care is the most appropriate route
- Medicines and treatments are available to buy over the counter

All prescribers within Doncaster CCG, including GPs and non-medical prescribers, should not prescribe readily available over-the-counter medicines.

Therefore children may come to school with medication that has been sold rather than prescribed and is not over labelled with prescribing instructions. Schools may need to review their medicines administration policies to take this into account.

## Considerations for schools<sup>3</sup>

1. [Appendix 1](#) lists the common minor or self-limiting illnesses that are considered suitable for self-care. This is included as a guide and is not promoted as an exhaustive list.
2. The Department of Education documents, 'Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions' and 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' explain the legislative requirements and good practice guidance in this area.
3. Prescription only medicines may not be administered in a school or early years setting unless they have been prescribed for a child by an 'Appropriate Practitioner', which includes a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist.
4. However, non-prescription over the counter medicines do not need an Appropriate Practitioner's prescription, signature or authorisation in order for a school or early years setting to give them.
5. Medicine (both prescription and non-prescription) must only be administered to a child under 16 where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent or carer.
6. From 1st October 2014, legislation on prescription only medicines changed to allow schools to buy salbutamol inhalers, without a prescription, for use in emergencies.

7. From 1st October 2017, legislation on prescription only medicines changed to allow schools to buy adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) devices, without a prescription, for use in emergencies.

## Appendix 1 – Minor Ailment List

**The following minor illnesses can be treated effectively and safely using over the counter medicines.**

**Treatments for these conditions are should not be provided via prescription except in exceptional circumstances**

Aches and pains	Head lice
Athlete's foot	Headaches and Migraines
Cold sores	Heartburn and indigestion
Colic	Mild dry skin
Constipation	Skin rashes
Coughs and colds	Other skin complaints Including acne, sun protection, birth marks, facial hair, bruising, tattoos, sweating
Dandruff	Sore throat
Diarrhoea	Teething and toothache
Ear wax	Threadworm
Foods Including gluten free, sip feeds & soya milks where not clinically required	Travel medicines including travel sickness
Fungal nail infections	Vitamins for prevention of deficiency, complementary medicines and health supplements when not clinically required.
Fungal skin infections	Varicose veins
Haemorrhoids (piles)	Vaginal thrush
Hayfever	

## References

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***Adapted from Newark & Sherwood and Mansfield & Ashfield CCGs  
Medicines for Self-Care Policy***