

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DRAFT Policy to reduce consultations and prescriptions for minor conditions suitable for self care

Q. What is meant by the term minor conditions/ailments suitable for self care?

A. Short lived, simple complaints that are not of a serious nature such as coughs and colds, headaches and indigestion.

Q Why are you asking patients to self care and buy their own treatments for minor conditions/ailments?

A There are two main reasons:

- To free up GP appointments so that they can be used for patients with more serious health problems
- To protect our cash-strapped NHS as these simple treatments cost our local health economy a staggering **£500,000 a year**, an amount that could be put to much better use. A pack of paracetamol tablets can cost the NHS around £50 if you use a GP appointment to request it.

Q. I don't pay for my prescriptions; will I still be able to get treatments and medicines for minor conditions from my GP?

A. This policy will apply to everyone regardless of whether they are exempt from prescription charges or not however some medicines are not licensed to be sold to certain groups of patients for clinical reasons (such as pregnancy), and in these cases GPs may prescribe them.

Q What are the conditions for which a GP consultation is not usually necessary and for which medicines will no longer be prescribed?

A. There is a list of conditions and medicines in the **DRAFT Policy to reduce general practice consultations and prescriptions for minor conditions suitable for self care** document [available on the CCG website](#).

Q. Where do I find information to help me take care of my health and manage minor conditions?

A. For people with access to a computer or smart phone, the [NHS Choices](#) website is recommended as the first place to find information. If you would rather speak to someone on the phone, [NHS 111](#) can give advice. If you would prefer to speak to a health professional face to face your community pharmacist can offer advice and can sell a wide range of medicines to help you look after yourself. Most community pharmacies have a consultation room where you can have a private conversation if you don't want to talk in public about your health concerns. For lots of advice on choosing the right service at the right time, visit our [Choose Well](#) web page.

Parents and carers of children aged 0 -5 can download an app we have developed with [Cheshire East Council](#) and [NHS South Cheshire CCG](#) to provide lots of advice on treating minor conditions. To find out more, visit www.catchapp.co.uk.

Q. Where can I get the listed treatments / medication from if my GP doesn't prescribe them?

A. Many of the treatments are available from the high street or from supermarkets and health food shops. All medicines are available at community pharmacies where you can speak to trained staff who can answer your questions and make appropriate recommendations. Pain killers can be bought from as little as 16p, and many other medications can be bought for less than the cost of a prescription charge (£8.40)

Q. Which patients would still be able to get vitamins on prescriptions?

A. Patients with certain medical conditions such as cystic fibrosis and confirmed vitamin D deficiency.

Q. What are the alternatives to ear wax remover?

A. Ear wax is a normal body secretion which only needs to be removed if it causes hearing loss. A few drops of olive oil used in the ear for 5 days is just as good as anything on prescription

Q. I sometimes suffer with indigestion; will I still be prescribed indigestion remedies?

A. If it is only occasional, these won't be prescribed. If it is frequent or severe your GP may prescribe an acid reducing medication and/or arrange for further tests if they are concerned.

Q. If a patient has been diagnosed with Eczema or Psoriasis, will they still be prescribed moisturisers?

A. Yes, eczema and psoriasis are long term clinical diagnoses, and GPs will still prescribe creams and ointments for patients with these conditions. This policy limits prescribing of moisturising creams for people with dry skin and minor rashes that are expected to get better quickly.

Q. I have previously been diagnosed with skin cancer, am I entitled to sun screen?

A. No. Only people with certain diagnosed medical conditions or taking certain medicines that cause them to be sensitive to the sun will be prescribed sun screen. Your pharmacist can advise you on how to protect your skin. [NHS Choices](#) website is another good source of information.

Q. I am on a repeat prescription for some of these treatments / medications; what will happen?

A. These proposals should only impact the prescribing of these treatments / medications for MINOR conditions. Please speak to your GP next time you see them about any impact for you if you have a repeat prescription.

Q. How will GPs be made aware of these changes if they are implemented?

A. When the proposals are implemented all GPs will be informed through existing communication channels.

Q. What will the money saved be used for?

A. The money saved will be used by the CCG to provide services and treatments for people with more serious health conditions. The CCG is facing [significant financial challenges](#) and is working with partners, patients and the public to set priorities for the services needed for local people.