

New prescribing policy

What is changing?

Our practice, along with others throughout England, will be implementing a new policy on prescriptions for over-the-counter medicines when used to treat a range of minor health conditions. The national guidance on this policy has come from NHS England and the full local policy can be found on the [Birmingham and Solihull CCG website](#).

The GPs and nurses at Bournbrook Varsity Medical Centre will no longer routinely be prescribing medicines that can be bought over-the-counter (OTC) for certain, mostly short term, conditions. We will also no longer be prescribing vitamin and mineral supplements for most patients.

We are asking patients to take a different approach to managing the following conditions:

- acute sore throat
- minor burns and scalds
- conjunctivitis
- mild cystitis
- coughs, colds and nasal congestion
- mild dry skin
- cradle cap
- mild irritant dermatitis
- dandruff
- mild to moderate hay fever
- diarrhoea (adults)
- dry eyes and sore tired eyes
- mouth ulcers
- earwax
- nappy rash
- excessive sweating
- infant colic
- sunburn
- infrequent cold sores of the lip
- sun protection
- infrequent constipation
- teething or mild toothache
- infrequent migraine
- threadworms
- insect bites and stings
- travel sickness
- mild acne
- warts and verrucae
- haemorrhoids (piles)
- oral thrush
- head lice
- prevention of tooth decay
- indigestion and heartburn
- ringworm or athlete's foot
- minor pain, discomfort and fever (such as aches and sprains, headache, period pain, and back pain)

We are moving towards the idea that these conditions will usually be treated via “self-care”. The team of health professionals at your local pharmacy can offer help and clinical advice to manage these minor health concerns. You can buy OTC medicines at your local pharmacy and/or supermarket for any of these conditions.

If you are prescribed medicines that are available over-the-counter for a chronic (long-term) medical condition, such as paracetamol for osteoarthritis, you will still have them prescribed by your GP.

Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care - Birmingham and Solihull CCG policy. October 2018. Review October 2020.

If you have certain long-term medical conditions we may still want you to see the GP or nurse for the conditions listed above, as it may be the most appropriate way for you to get your medicines and allow us to monitor your health.

Why are we doing this?

In the financial year 2017/18, the Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), which our practice is part of, spent approximately £ 15.7 million on prescriptions for medicines which could otherwise be purchased over the counter from a pharmacy and/or other outlets such as petrol stations or supermarkets. The costs to the NHS for many of the items used to treat minor conditions are often higher than the prices for which they can be purchased over-the-counter.

The benefits of this new policy include:

- Fewer appointments in general practice will be taken up in dealing with conditions which are suitable for self-care. This means that more appointments will be available for those who need medical advice.
- People will be encouraged to take more control over their own healthcare, using the skills of highly trained community pharmacists if they wish to do so.
- NHS resources can be re-focussed towards other treatments e.g. new medicines to prevent strokes, better medicines to improve breathing, a wider variety of treatments for diabetes.

Where can I find more information?

See the [Birmingham and Solihull CCG website](#) for more information on the policy, frequently asked questions and where to get information to support 'self-care'.