

Get wise about medicines– When should you prescribe?

Items of medication that can be purchased “over the counter” (OTC) are classified in two ways:

- P (Pharmacy only) - these items can only be purchased from a pharmacy
- GSL (General Sales List) – these items can be purchased from a pharmacy, supermarket or other store.

P and GSL items can only be purchased for their licensed indications and often in limited quantities. Please see below the circumstances where it will be necessary to prescribe an OTC item for a minor condition as it will not be possible to purchase it due to the restrictions of the licence.

OTC condition	Product	Restrictions on OTC (therefore must be prescribed)	Licence *
Acne	Benzoyl peroxide 5% gel (Acnecide®)	Patient < 12 years, pregnancy, breastfeeding	P
Allergies	Beclomethasone 0.05% nasal spray (Beconase®)	Patient < 18 years old Cases of chronic rhinitis (OTC product advises patients to consult doctor if using for than 3 consecutive months)	GSL (100 doses) P (190 doses)
	Fluticasone 0.5% nasal spray (Pirinase Allergy®)		GSL (60 doses)
	Sodium Cromoglicate eye drops (Allercrom®)	Patient < 6years Pregnancy, breastfeeding	GSL
	Hydrocortisone 1% cream	Patients < 10 years old For chronic diagnosed skin conditions for use on genital areas or face Patient has used OTC products > 7 days	P
	Chlorphenamine maleate 2mg/5ml oral solution	Patient < 1 year old	P
	Cetirizine 10mg tablets	Patient < 6years Pregnancy, Breastfeeding	GSL (pack size 7 or 14 tablets) P (other pack sizes)
	Loratadine 10mg tablets		
Athlete's Foot	Hycortisone 1% and miconazole 2% cream (Daktacort®)	Patients < 10 years old OTC licence only covers sweat rash and athlete's foot For use on genital areas or face Patient has used OTC product for > 7 days	P
	Miconazole 2% cream (Daktarin®)	Patient is diabetic (and is using on the foot)	P
	Terbinafine 1% cutaneous solution (Lamisil Once®)	OTC licence covers single dose treatment of athlete's foot patient is < 18 years old No improvement in 7 days	GSL
Bacterial conjunctivitis	Chloramphenicol 0.5% eye drops chloramphenicol 1% eye ointment (Optrex®)	Patient < 2 years old Pregnancy Breastfeeding OTC licence only covers treatment of bacterial conjunctivitis only	P
Colic	Lactase (Colief® drops)	Patient falls within ACBS criteria	GSL
Constipation	Bisacodyl 5mg GR tablets (Duloclast®)	Patient <10 years old Chronic use (as part of a treatment plan)	GSL P (pack size 100 tablets)
	Senna 7.5mg tablets	Patient < 12 years old Chronic use (as part of a treatment plan)	GSL
Coughs & Colds	Pholcodine 5mg/5ml linctus	Long term cough or asthma OTC product should only be used for 5 days for treatment of acute non-productive cough	P
	Pseudoephedrine tablets	Patient <12 years old, hypertension, pregnancy, breastfeeding, hyperthyroidism.	P
Dandruff	Ketoconazole 2% shampoo (Nizoral anti-dandruff shampoo®)	OTC licence covers treatment of dandruff and seborrheic dermatitis (scalp) only	GSL
Dental Hygiene	Chlorhexidine gluconate 0.2% mouthwash	For chronic use in the management of long term condition (eg prevention of oral candidiasis in immunocompromised patients) Diabetes, renal or liver disease, low sodium or potassium diet	GSL
Diarrhoea (adults only)	Dioralyte® relief sachets		GSL
	Loperamide 2mg capsules	Patients < 12 years old (for diarrhoea), IBD, post bowel surgery Chronic use (as part of treatment plan)	GSL (pack size 6) P (other pack sizes)
Dry skin conditions	Should only be prescribed an emollient for a diagnosed skin condition and product choice should be in line with Emollient Guidelines http://gp.northamptonshireccg.nhs.uk/downloads/topics/patientinformation/Dermatology/emollient-pil.pdf		
Food items	Prescribing of milk products in children < 2 years old with Cow's Milk Protein Allergy should be in line with local guidance Cow's Milk Protein Allergy		
Fungal Nail Treatment	CCG does not recommend the prescribing of topical antifungal nail preparations. If GP considers it necessary oral antifungal treatment can be considered.		

OTC condition	Product	Restrictions on OTC (therefore must be prescribed)	Licence *
General wellbeing	Vitamin D supplements	Patient requires high doses of vitamin D for deficiency purposes (only if levels <25 mmol/L) as per local guidelines	GSL
Haemorrhoids	Anusol® cream/ointment/suppositories	Patient <18 years. Chronic use (as part of a treatment plan)	GSL
Head lice	Dimeticone 4% lotion (Hedrin®)	Patient < 6 months old	GSL (50ml pack) P (other pack size)
Heartburn/ Indigestion	Gaviscon Advance® Double Action® liquid	Patient < 12 years old	GSL (pack size 150 ml & 300 ml)
	Gaviscon Double Action® liquid	Symptoms are persistent after 7 days	GSL
	Gaviscon Original® liquid	Patient < 6 years old Symptoms are persistent after 7 days	GSL
	Esomeprazole 20mg g/r tablets (Nexium Control®)	Patients < 18 years old or > 55 years with new symptoms Patient requires a daily dose > 20mg, Pregnancy, Breastfeeding For Chronic use (over 14 days)	GSL
	Omeprazole 10mg GR tablets		P
	Pantoprazole 20mg g/r tablets (Pantoloc Control®)		P
Ranitidine 75 mg tablets (Zantac Relief®)	Patient < 16 years old Patient requires a daily dose > 150mg For chronic use (over 14 days)	GSL (pack size of 6, 12)	
Short term pain	Co-codamol 8mg/500mg tablets/soluble tablets	Patients < 12 years old Pregnancy Breastfeeding Chronic use (OTC product can be used for a maximum of 3 days) Patient requires higher strength of 15/500mg or 30/500mg tablets	P
	Ibuprofen 200mg/400mg tablets	Quantities ≥ 96 tablets (quantities ≥ 32 sold at the clinical discretion of a pharmacist) Daily doses of > 1200mg required for Chronic diagnosed pain use. Asthma, uncontrolled BP, stomach ulcer, anticoagulant use, pregnancy, breastfeeding.	GSL 200 mg(pack size of 16 tablets) P 200mg (pack size 24 tablets) and 400mg (any pack size)
	Naproxen 250mg g/r tablets (Feminax Ultra®)	OTC licence covers treatment of primary dysmenorrhoea for a maximum of 3 days per a cycle only Patients < 15 years old or > 50 years old	P
Sore throat	Benzydamine 0.15% oromucosal spray (Difflam®)	Patient < 12 year old Pregnancy Breastfeeding	P
Sun protection	Uvistat®	No restrictions	P
Sweating	Aluminium chloride hexahydrate (Driclor®)	OTC licence covers treatment of hyperhidrosis affecting the armpits (axillae), the hands and feet only	P
Teething	Bonjela® teething gel	Patients < 2 months old	GSL
Threadworms	Mebendazole 100 mg tablets (Ovex®)	OTC licence covers treatment of threadworms only Patient requires a daily dose > 100 mg Patient < 2 years old Pregnancy Breastfeeding	P
Thrush	Clotrimazole 10% internal and 2% external cream combi (Canesten®)	Patients < 16 years old or > 60 years old. More than 2 episodes of thrush within 6 months Underlying conditions which predisposes patients to develop thrush * Pregnancy	P
	Clotrimazole 2% cream (Canesten Thrush® Cream)		P
	Clotrimazole 500mg pessary and 2% external cream (Canesten®)	Patients < 16 years old or > 60 years old. More than 2 episodes of thrush within 6 months No improvement in symptoms within 7 days. Underlying conditions which predisposes patient to develop thrush Pregnancy	GSL
	Fluconazole 150mg oral capsule (Canesten®)	Patient <16 years or >60 years Pregnancy	P
Travel protection	Cinnarizine 15 mg tablets	Patient children < 5 years old OTC licence covers treatment of symptoms associated with motion sickness	P
Verrucae and Warts	Bazuka® gel	OTC licence does not cover use near the face, neck, armpits, breasts, bottom or genital regions, or by diabetics of individuals who suffer from poor blood circulation to the hands or feet	GSL (Bazuka gel) P (Bazuka extra strength)