

## **Position Statement: Prescribing of Medications Available to Purchase over the counter**

**National Policy does not support the routine prescribing of medication that is available to buy from local pharmacies or supermarkets for children or adults.**

**The medications listed below are examples of medicines that should be purchased by the patient/parent/guardian.**

**This list is not exhaustive.**

**NHS Shropshire CCG believes funding of medicines available to purchase to treat self-limiting conditions and minor ailments and self-care is a personal responsibility.**

- It is expected that patients will purchase such medicines, after seeking appropriate advice from a community pharmacist or other healthcare professional.
- All patients, regardless of where they live, should be able to access and purchase such medicines.
- There is a range of resources for advice on medicines use, e.g. community pharmacists, NHS 111, which can be used to enable self-care before seeking advice from a GP or a Nurse.
- Individuals are expected, where possible, to try to alter their diet and life-style if it is probable that this is the cause of a minor health problem, e.g. dyspepsia.
- Medicines can be purchased over the counter (OTC) from community pharmacies and/or supermarkets. These often have extended opening times therefore allowing rapid access and early treatment, rather than delaying treatment by attending a GP appointment for a prescription. The range of medicines available increases regularly and a community pharmacist would be best placed to give advice on the most appropriate product to use. Many minor ailments are not of a serious nature and will resolve within a short time-frame without the need for treatment.
- Community Pharmacists are able to advise and signpost patients in situations where they should seek medical advice.
- Community pharmacists should not advise patients to request their GP to prescribe medicines available for self-limiting conditions and minor health problems where these are available to purchase.
- If patients are regularly using OTC medicines for a long term condition e.g. Regular full dose paracetamol for chronic pain, it would not be unreasonable to prescribe.
- It is important to check that the OTC medicine is licensed for the indication that it is to be used for; otherwise requests for purchasing OTC medicines for unlicensed indications will be refused by community pharmacies.