

## Help us to help you

**Part of our drive to change the way we do things includes helping you to self-care by looking after yourself and being prepared.**

Self-care is being able to manage symptoms such as coughs, colds, fever, aches and pains yourself. Not only does this improve your quality of life it helps you reduce stress, making you feel more positive and confident in taking control of your own health and wellbeing.

The best way to self-care is to be prepared for yourself and your family. Keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home will prepare you for some of the most common illnesses so you can treat them immediately, when needed, without having to wait to see your doctor. Your local pharmacist can give you advice on what to have in your medicine cabinet that you can easily buy from your pharmacies or supermarket.

## Contact us

If you would like to know more or require this document in an alternative format or language, please contact us.

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With Acknowledgement to East Riding  
of Yorkshire CCG

Help protect  
the NHS  
from being  
swallowwed  
up

We are encouraging you to buy medicines over the counter for short-term, self-limiting conditions only. Any medication needed for long-term conditions will continue to be prescribed.

✉ [enquiries@bedfordshireccg.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@bedfordshireccg.nhs.uk)

☎ 01525 864405

🌐 [www.bedfordshireccg.nhs.uk](http://www.bedfordshireccg.nhs.uk)



The NHS belongs to everyone and to protect its financial stability and future for generations to come we need to make important changes to how we deliver and use health and care services.

Your local NHS spends around £2 million paying for medicines that patients in Bedfordshire could buy over the counter. We believe this money could be better spent on essential healthcare services that benefit everyone.

## Meeting everyone's healthcare needs

NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group is responsible for planning and buying your local health services. This includes paying for the medication patients get on prescription. Demand for services is rising and there are many pressures that threaten to overwhelm your local NHS: our population is ageing; we are seeing a growth in the number of people with long-term conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and hypertension; a large increase in the number of prescriptions given out, and rapidly rising medicine costs. We are looking at how we can do things differently, so we have made changes to how we prescribe some medicines that can easily be bought at a pharmacy or supermarket. We think these are common sense changes that will help to bring down our prescription spend without impacting on your health and care. And you agree. In our recent consultation regarding over the counter medicine, 63% of you agreed with our decision to ask people to buy their own items when available at a lower cost at pharmacies and supermarkets.

## Buy over the counter - it saves everyone time

There are a wide range of medicines that are available at your local pharmacy or supermarket at a lower cost than it would cost your doctor to prescribe them.

Pharmacists are trained to provide advice and, where appropriate, sell medicines for minor ailments. No appointment is needed to see a pharmacist and, in general, pharmacies and supermarkets are open longer hours than GP practices, including weekends.

Painkillers such as paracetamol are widely available in pharmacies and supermarkets and cost around 1p per tablet compared to 3p per tablet on the NHS. This is why, when you only need them now and again, it is better to buy over the counter instead. Getting medicine you can buy over the counter on prescription is more expensive due to time taken in dealing with appointments, handling prescriptions and dispensing medication.

Where clinically appropriate, your doctor will now encourage you to purchase certain items yourself at your local pharmacy or supermarket.

## Common self-care items include:

- Moisturising creams, gels, ointments and balms
- Bath oils and shower gel
- Anti-diarrhoeal medication for short term diarrhoea
- Antifungal preparations e.g. Canesten
- Anti-inflammatory gels e.g. ibuprofen gel
- Head lice treatments
- Lactose free infant formula
- Cough and cold remedies
- Mouthwash e.g. Corsodyl
- Haemorrhoidal preparations e.g. Anusol
- Hay fever remedies
- Preventative vitamins and supplements
- Lubricating eye drops and eye preparations for mild infections (patients >2yrs)
- Paracetamol and ibuprofen for short term use
- Rehydration sachets
- Laxatives for short term use
- Threadworm tablets
- Antiperspirants
- Medicated shampoos e.g. Alphosyl, Capasal
- Indigestion remedies e.g. Gaviscon, Peptac
- Nasal douches e.g. Sterimar
- Teething remedies

Drugs like paracetamol can cost up to three times more on prescription than from a supermarket. Please, buy them over the counter instead.



We all have an individual responsibility to look after ourselves, improve our physical and mental wellbeing and change how we use NHS services. This is why, when you only need some medication now and again, it is better to buy over the counter instead.