Over the counter items - GP guide to self care

In March 2018, NHS England published guidance for conditions for which over the counter (OTC) items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care. It listed 35 conditions plus probiotics and vitamins and minerals, as areas where self care may be more appropriate. There are, however, some exceptions to this guidance listed below.

General exceptions to the guidance

There are certain scenarios where patients should continue to have their treatments prescribed. These are:

- Patients prescribed an OTC treatment for a long term condition, e.g. regular pain relief for chronic arthritis or treatments for inflammatory bowel disease.
- For the treatment of more complex forms of minor illnesses, e.g. severe migraines that are unresponsive to OTC medicines.
- For those patients that have symptoms that suggest the condition is not minor, i.e. those with red flag symptoms, for example, indigestion with very bad pain.
- Treatment for complex patients, e.g. immunosuppressed patients.
- Patients on prescription only treatments.
- Patients prescribed OTC products to treat an adverse effect or symptom of a more complex illness.
- Prescription only medications should continue to have these products prescribed on the NHS.
- Circumstances where the product licence doesn't allow the product to be sold over the counter to certain groups of patients. This may vary by medicine, but could include babies, children and/or women who are pregnant or breast-feeding. Community Pharmacists will be aware of what these are and can advise accordingly.
- Patients with a minor condition suitable for self care that has not responded sufficiently to treatment with an OTC product.

This guide covers:

- The licenced indications of products available OTC and highlights where the licensing exceptions would prohibit self care.
- The general exceptions for the medicine and exceptions due to product licences for over the counter medicines available to treat the conditions listed in the NHS England guidance.
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# Items of low clinical effectiveness

| 1. Probiotics | There is currently insufficient clinical evidence to support prescribing of probiotics within the NHS for the treatment or prevention of diarrhoea of any cause.\(^2,3\)

**Exceptions**
- ACBS approved indication or as per local policy. The ACBS recommends some foods and toilet preparations that may be regarded as drugs for the treatment of specified conditions. If a doctor is satisfied that the product can be safely prescribed, that patients will be adequately monitored and have access to hospital supervision if needed, they can prescribe these products on a prescription endorsed with "ACBS".

| 2. Vitamins and minerals | There is insufficient high-quality evidence to demonstrate the clinical effectiveness of vitamins and minerals.\(^4\)

Vitamins and minerals are essential nutrients which most people can and should get from eating a healthy, varied, and balanced diet. In most cases, dietary supplementation is unnecessary.

Many vitamin and mineral supplements are classified as foods and not medicines; they therefore do not have to go through the strict criteria laid down by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to confirm their quality, safety, and efficacy before reaching the market. It is therefore not deemed appropriate for such preparations to be routinely funded on the NHS.

Any prescribing not in-line with listed exceptions should be discontinued.

This guidance does not apply to Healthy Start Vitamins, but these are not currently prescribed on an NHS prescription.

**Exceptions**
- Medically diagnosed deficiency, including for those patients who may have a lifelong or chronic condition or have undergone surgery that results in malabsorption. Continuing need should however be reviewed on a regular basis. NB maintenance or preventative treatment is not an exception.
- Calcium and vitamin D for osteoporosis.
- Malnutrition including alcoholism.
- Patients suitable to receive Healthy Start Vitamins for pregnancy or children between the ages of six months to their fourth birthday. (NB. this is not on prescription but commissioned separately).
## Self-limiting conditions

Please note the following information about the column headings:

- **Medication** - For further advice see product information leaflet
- **Common brands** - The lists are not exhaustive and other brands are available which a community pharmacist will be able to advise upon.
- **OTC restrictions** - For further advice on restrictions, see product information leaflet
- **Classification** - P = pharmacy only          GSL = general sales list

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<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Acute sore throat</strong></td>
<td>Red flag symptoms</td>
<td>Benzydamine 0.15% mouthwash(^5) and oromucosal spray(^6)</td>
<td>• Difflam®Spray(^7)                       • Difflam® Oral rinse(^8)</td>
<td>• Children under 12 years (oral rinse)                      • Pregnancy, breastfeeding</td>
<td>P</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Throat lozenges</td>
<td>• Strepsils®(^9)                       • Throaties®(^10)                              • Tyrozets®(^11)</td>
<td>GSL P</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Throat sprays</td>
<td>• Ultra Chloraseptic®(^12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Infrequent cold sores of the lip</strong></td>
<td>Immuno-compromised patients Red flag symptoms</td>
<td>Aciclovir cream 5%(^13)</td>
<td>• Virasorb®(^14)                       • Zovirax®(^15)                                • Lypsyl®(^16)</td>
<td>GSL</td>
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### Condition

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<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
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| **5. Conjunctivitis**      | Red flag symptoms          | **Chloramphenicol 0.5% eye drops** 17  
**Chloramphenicol 1% eye ointment** 18 |
|                            |                             | **Common brands**                                                                 |
|                            |                             | - BrochloR®<sup>19</sup>  
- Golden eye®<sup>20</sup>  
- Optrex®<sup>21</sup> |
|                            |                             | **OTC restrictions**                                                   |
|                            |                             | - Children under 2 years  
- Pregnancy, breastfeeding |
|                            |                             | **Classification**                                                                 |
|                            |                             | P |
| **6. Coughs and colds and nasal congestion** | Red flag symptoms | **Paracetamol 500mg tablets**<sup>22</sup> and capsules<sup>23</sup>  
**Paracetamol 120mg/5ml suspension (from 3 months) sugar free**<sup>24</sup>  
**Paracetamol 250mg/5ml suspension (from 6 years old)**<sup>25</sup> |
|                            |                             | **Common brands**                                                                 |
|                            |                             | - Anadin paracetamol®<sup>26</sup>  
- Mandanol®<sup>27</sup>  
- Panadol®<sup>28</sup>  
- Hedex®<sup>29</sup>  
- Calpol®<sup>30</sup> |
|                            |                             | **OTC restrictions**                                                   |
|                            |                             | - Severe renal or severe hepatic impairment  
- Long term conditions requiring regular pain relief  
- Children under 2 months  
- Babies born before 37 weeks  
- Babies weighing less than 4kg |
|                            |                             | **Classification**                                                                 |
|                            |                             | GSL/P depending on pack size |
|                            |                             | **Ibuprofen 200mg, 400mg capsules/tablets**<sup>31-34</sup>  
**Ibuprofen 100mg/5ml oral suspension**<sup>25</sup> |
|                            |                             | **Common brands**                                                                 |
|                            |                             | - Anadin Ibuprofen®<sup>36</sup>  
- Nurofen®<sup>37</sup>  
- Calprofen®<sup>38</sup>  
- Cuprofen®<sup>39</sup>  
- Anadin Joint pain®<sup>40</sup> |
|                            |                             | **OTC restrictions**                                                   |
|                            |                             | - Long term conditions requiring regular pain relief  
- Asthma  
- Unstable high blood pressure  
- Taking anticoagulants  
- Stomach ulcer, perforation or bleeding (active or history of)  
- Children under 3 months  
- Renal impairment  
- Hepatic impairment  
- Cardiac impairment  
- Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
- Avoid the use in chicken pox |
<p>|                            |                             | <strong>Classification</strong>                                                                 |
|                            |                             | GSL/P depending on pack size |</p>
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</table>
| 6. Coughs and colds and nasal congestion continued | Red flag symptoms | Pseudoephedrine or pseudoephedrine-containing preparations | • Sudafed®<sup>41</sup>  
• Benadryl® Allergy Relief Plus Decongestant Capsules<sup>42</sup>  
• Galpseud®<sup>43</sup> | • Children under 12 years  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
• Severe hypertension or severe coronary artery disease  
• Severe renal impairment  
• Phaeochromocytoma  
• Diabetes  
• Hyperthyroidism  
• Closed angle glaucoma | P |
| 7. Cradle cap (seborrhoeic dermatitis – infants) | If causing distress to the infant and not improving | Emulsifying ointment and shampoo | • Capasal<sup>TM</sup> Therapeutic Shampoo<sup>46</sup>  
• Dentinox<sup>®</sup> Shampoo Cradle Cap<sup>47</sup>  
• Boots Cradle Cap Cream<sup>®</sup><sup>48</sup> | • If the cradle cap has spread to the face  
• Do not use on broken skin or infected skin | GSL |
| 8. Haemorrhoids | Red flag symptoms | Zinc oxide preparations | • Anusol® cream<sup>49</sup> and suppositories<sup>50</sup>  
• Germoloids® cream<sup>52</sup> ointment<sup>53</sup> and suppositories<sup>54</sup> | • Not recommended for children (Anusol®)  
• Children under 12 years (Germoloids®)  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
• Rectal bleeding or blood in stools | GSL |
<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Infant colic</td>
<td>Red flag symptoms</td>
<td>Simeticone 40mg/ml&lt;sup&gt;55&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Infacol&lt;sup&gt;55&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• No restrictions</td>
<td>GSL</td>
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<td>Dimeticone 42mg/5ml&lt;sup&gt;56&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Dentinox&lt;sup&gt;56&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Fructose, glucose-galactose, or sucrose intolerant patients (contains sucrose)</td>
<td>GSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Mild cystitis</td>
<td>Red flag symptoms</td>
<td>Sodium citrate 4g sachet&lt;sup&gt;57&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Caneoasis cystitis relief granules&lt;sup&gt;58&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Men&lt;br&gt;• Children under 16 years&lt;br&gt;• Diabetes&lt;br&gt;• Heart disease, hypertension, renal disease&lt;br&gt;• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</td>
<td>GSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Potassium citrate 1.5g liquid&lt;sup&gt;60&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;3g sachet&lt;sup&gt;61&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;1.5g tablet (effervescent)&lt;sup&gt;52&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Cymaclear&lt;sup&gt;60&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;• Cystopurin&lt;sup&gt;61&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;• Effercitrate&lt;sup&gt;62&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Children under 6 years&lt;br&gt;• Renal disease/impairment&lt;br&gt;• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</td>
<td>GSL</td>
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## Minor illnesses suitable for self care

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</table>
| **11. Mild irritant**      | **DERMATITIS**                                                             | **Emollients**                  | • Eurax®[^63]  
  • Eurax-Hc® Cream[^64]  
  • Hc45 Hydrocortisone Cream[^65] | • Children under 12 years with certain brands however:  
  » Eurax® licenced for children over 3 years  
  » Hc45® Hydrocortisone Cream licenced for children over 10 years  
  • Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
  • Broken or inflamed skin  
  • Use on the eyes and face  
  • Ano-genital region | **P**                        |
| **12. Dandruff**           | **No routine exceptions have been identified**                           | **Ketoconazole-containing**     | • Nizoral® Anti-dandruff shampoo[^66]  
  • Polytar® scalp shampoo[^67]  
  • Capasal™ Therapeutic Shampoo[^68]  
  • Alphosyl® ‘2in1’ shampoo[^69] | • Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
  • Children under 12 years | **GSL**                     |
|                            | **No routine exceptions have been identified**                           | **Coal tar shampoo**           |                                                                                                        |                                                                                   | **GSL/P**      |
|                            | **See earlier for general exceptions**                                    | **Selenium sulfide shampoo**   | • Selsun® Shampoo[^70]  
  • Infected open skin lesions  
  • Sore or acute pustular psoriasis | • Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
  • Children under 5 years | **P**                        |
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</table>
| 13. Diarrhoea (Adults only)| No routine exceptions have been identified See earlier for general exceptions  | Oral rehydration solutions/sachets | • Dioralyte® Relief Sachets\(^{71}\)  
• Imodium® Rehydration Salts\(^{72}\)  | • Children under 5 years  
• Liver or renal disease  
• Low potassium/sodium diets  
• Diabetes                                                                 | GSL                          |
|                            | THIS RECOMMENDATION DOES NOT APPLY TO CHILDREN                               | Loperamide 2mg capsules\(^{73}\)  | • Imodium®\(^{74}\)  
• Dioraleze®\(^{75}\)  
• Entrocalm®\(^{75}\)  
• Diafix®\(^{75}\)  | • Inflammatory bowel disease  
• Post bowel surgery  
• Post pelvic radiation  
• Colorectal cancer                                                                 | GSL/P depending on pack size |
| 14. Dry eyes/sore (tired)  | eyes No routine exceptions have been identified See earlier for general exceptions Pre-existing eye conditions | Hypromellose 0.3%\(^{76}\)  | • Tears Naturale® Eye Drops\(^{77}\)  
• Isopto® Plain\(^{78}\)  | • Children under 18 years (Carbomer)  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding (check individual brands)                                                                 | P                           |
|                            |                                                                            | Carbomer                          | • Viscotears® Liquid Gel\(^{79}\)  
• Gel Tears®\(^{80}\)  
• Liquivisc®\(^{81}\)  |                                                                 |                              |
|                            |                                                                            | Yellow Soft Paraffin BP/PhEur  
Anhydrous Lanolin (Wool Fat) BP/PhEur  
Liquid Paraffin BP/PhEur | • Simple® Eye Ointment\(^{82}\)  |                                                                 |                              |
|                            |                                                                            | Distilled witchhazel             | • Optrex® Sore Eyes Drops\(^{83}\)  |                                                                 |                              |
### 15. Earwax

- No routine exceptions have been identified
- See earlier for general exceptions
- Perforated ear drum

**Medication:**
- Olive oil drops
- Arachis oil/chlorobutanol hemihydrate drops
- Docusate sodium 0.5% drops
- Acetic acid 2% (not licensed for wax removal, may help if ears itch after wax removal, however significant itching may indicate infection and this should be confirmed and treated by the GP)

**Common brands:**
- Cerumol®
- Waxsol®
- EarCalm®

**OTC restrictions:**
- No restrictions

**Classification:**
- GSL (Olive oil)
- P (all other ear drops/sprays)

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### 16. Excessive sweating (hyperhidrosis)

- No routine exceptions have been identified
- See earlier for general exceptions

**Medication:**
- Aluminium chloride

**Common brands:**
- Driclor®
- Anhydrol Forte®

**OTC restrictions:**
- Broken or infected skin
- External use only

**Classification:**
- P

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### 17. Head lice

- No routine exceptions have been identified
- See earlier for general exceptions
- Current skin conditions of the scalp
- Side effects of a severe infestation

**Medication:**
- Dimeticone gel, lotion or spray 4%
- Malathion Aqueous lotion 0.5%

**Common brands:**
- Hedrin®
- Nyda®
- Derbac-M®

**OTC restrictions:**
- Children under 6 months
- Pregnancy, breastfeeding
- Avoid use on broken or inflamed skin

**Classification:**
- GSL/P depending on pack size

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**Condition** | **Exceptions** | **Medication** | **Common brands** | **OTC restrictions** | **Classification**
---|---|---|---|---|---
15. Earwax | No routine exceptions have been identified  See earlier for general exceptions  Perforated ear drum | Olive oil drops  Arachis oil/chlorobutanol hemihydrate drops  Docusate sodium 0.5% drops  Acetic acid 2% (not licensed for wax removal, may help if ears itch after wax removal, however significant itching may indicate infection and this should be confirmed and treated by the GP) | Cerumol®  Waxsol®  EarCalm® | No restrictions | GSL (Olive oil)  P (all other ear drops/sprays)
16. Excessive sweating (hyperhidrosis) | No routine exceptions have been identified  See earlier for general exceptions | Aluminium chloride | Driclor®  Anhydrol Forte® | Broken or infected skin  External use only | P
17. Head lice | No routine exceptions have been identified  See earlier for general exceptions  Current skin conditions of the scalp  Side effects of a severe infestation | Dimeticone gel, lotion or spray 4%  Malathion Aqueous lotion 0.5% | Hedrin®  Nyda®  Derbac-M® | Children under 6 months  Pregnancy, breastfeeding  Avoid use on broken or inflamed skin | GSL/P depending on pack size  GSL
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</table>
| 18. Indigestion and heartburn | No routine exceptions have been identified  
See earlier for general exceptions                      | Sodium alginate  
Calcium carbonate  
Sodium bicarbonate | • Gaviscon® tablets\(^{92}\)  
• Gaviscon Double action®\(^{93}\)  
• Acidex\(^{94}\) | • Children under 12 years  
• Renal failure  
• Hypercalcaemia  
• Nephrocalcinosis  
• Kidney stones | GSL |
|                         |                                                                            | Gaviscon Infant®\(^{95}\)           |                                                    | • Children under 12 months  
• Babies born before 37 weeks  
• Children over 2 years  
• Renal impairment | P |
|                         |                                                                            | Esomeprazole 20mg tablets            | • Nexium Control®\(^{96}\)                       | • Children under 18 years  
• Adults over 55 years  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
• Jaundice or liver disease | GSL |
|                         |                                                                            | Pantoprazole 20mg tablets            | • Pantoloc Control®\(^{97}\)                    | • Children under 18 years  
• Adults over 55 years  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
• Jaundice or liver disease | P |
|                         |                                                                            | Ranitidine 75mg tablets\(^{98}\)    | • Zantac\(^{99}\)  
• Gavilast\(^{100}\)  
• Ranicalm\(^{101}\) | • Children under 16 years  
• Peptic ulceration  
• Elderly taking NSAIDs  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding | GSL (pack size 12 tablets) |
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<tr>
<td>19. Infrequent constipation</td>
<td>No routine exceptions have been identified</td>
<td>Lactulose&lt;sup&gt;102&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Duphalac&lt;sup&gt;®&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;sup&gt;103&lt;/sup&gt; • Lactugal&lt;sup&gt;®&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;sup&gt;104&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Galactosaemia • Gastro-intestinal obstruction, digestive perforation or risk of digestive perforation</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>See earlier for general exceptions</td>
<td>Bisacodyl tablets 5mg&lt;sup&gt;105&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Dulcolax&lt;sup&gt;®&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;sup&gt;106&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Acute inflammatory bowel diseases • Severe dehydration • Pregnancy and breastfeeding • Children under 4 years</td>
<td>GSL/P depending on pack size</td>
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<td>Senna&lt;sup&gt;107&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Senokot&lt;sup&gt;®&lt;/sup&gt; Dual Relief Tablets&lt;sup&gt;108&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Severe dehydration • Children under 18 years • Pregnancy, breastfeeding</td>
<td>GSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ispaghula Husk Granules</td>
<td>• Fybogel&lt;sup&gt;®&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;sup&gt;109&lt;/sup&gt; • Ispagel&lt;sup&gt;®&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;sup&gt;110&lt;/sup&gt; • Manevac&lt;sup&gt;®&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;sup&gt;111&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Children under 6 years • Diabetes</td>
<td>GSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **20. Infrequent migraine** | No routine exceptions have been identified See earlier for general exceptions | Prochlorperazine maleate                                                   | • Buccastem® M Tab 3mg<sup>112</sup>   | • Impaired liver function  
• Existing blood dyscrasias  
• Epilepsy  
• Parkinson's Disease  
• Prostatic hypertrophy  
• Narrow angle glaucoma  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
• Children under 18 years | P                          |
|                        |                                                                            | Paracetamol 500mg tablets<sup>22</sup> and capsules<sup>23</sup>           | • Anadin paracetamol<sup>26</sup>  
• Mandanol<sup>27</sup>  
• Panadol<sup>28</sup>  
• Hedex<sup>29</sup>   | • Long term conditions requiring regular pain relief  
• Children under 12 years  
• Severe renal or severe hepatic impairment | GSL/P depending on pack size |
|                        |                                                                            | Paracetamol 500mg/5ml oral solution<sup>113</sup>                          |                                         |                                                                                  |                |
|                        |                                                                            | Paracetamol 500mg soluble tablets<sup>114</sup>                            |                                         |                                                                                  |                |
|                        |                                                                            | Ibuprofen 200mg, 400mg capsules and tablets<sup>31-34</sup>                | • Anadin® Ibuprofen<sup>26</sup>  
• Nurofen<sup>37</sup>  
• Calprofen<sup>38</sup>  
• Cuprofen<sup>39</sup> | • Long term conditions requiring regular pain relief  
• Asthma  
• Unstable high blood pressure  
• Taking anticoagulants  
• Stomach ulcer, perforation or bleeding (active or history of)  
• Renal impairment  
• Hepatic impairment  
• Cardiac impairment  
• Children under 12 years  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding | GSL/P depending on pack size |
## 227. Over the counter items - GP guide to self care 2.1

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infrequent migraine</td>
<td>No routine exceptions have been identified</td>
<td>Co-codamol 8/500mg tablets, capsules, effervescent tablets</td>
<td>• Migraleve® Yellow tablets¹¹⁵</td>
<td>• Children under 12 years</td>
<td>P (up to 32 tablets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continued</td>
<td>See earlier for general exceptions</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Paracodol®¹¹⁶</td>
<td>• Severe liver disease</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Children under 12 years, Severe liver disease</td>
<td>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Insect bites and stings</td>
<td>No routine exceptions have been identified</td>
<td>Mepyramine maleate 2%</td>
<td>• Anthisan® Bite &amp; Sting cream 2%¹¹⁷</td>
<td>• Broken or infected skin</td>
<td>GSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>See earlier for general exceptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Children under 2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lidocaine hydrochloride/zinc sulphate/cetrimide</td>
<td>• Savlon® Bites &amp; Stings Pain Relief Gel¹¹⁸</td>
<td>• Children under 12 years</td>
<td>GSL</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Animal bites</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Calamine/zinc oxide³¹⁹</td>
<td>• Calamine lotion¹¹⁹</td>
<td>• Broken or infected skin</td>
<td>GSL</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chloroxylenol/triclosan/edetic acid</td>
<td>• Dettol® Antiseptic Cream¹²⁰</td>
<td>• Dermatitis, eczema or other skin complaints</td>
<td>GSL</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Mild acne</td>
<td>No routine exceptions have been identified</td>
<td>Benzoyl peroxide-containing preparations</td>
<td>• Acnecide®¹²¹</td>
<td>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>See earlier for general exceptions</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Duac® Once Daily¹²²</td>
<td>• Damaged skin</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Quinoderm®¹²³</td>
<td>• Elderly</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Children under 12 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Mild dry skin</td>
<td>See earlier for general exceptions</td>
<td>Emollients, creams and ointments</td>
<td>• Balneum Plus®¹²⁴</td>
<td>• Broken or inflamed skin</td>
<td>GSL</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cetraben®¹²⁵</td>
<td>• E45 for children over 1 month old</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Dermol®¹²⁶</td>
<td>• Cetraben® Cream and lotion over 1 year olds</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• E45®¹²⁷</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Oilatum®¹²⁸</td>
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<th>Condition</th>
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<th>Medication</th>
<th>Common brands</th>
<th>OTC restrictions</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. Sunburn due to excessive sun exposure</td>
<td>See earlier for general exceptions</td>
<td>After sun products</td>
<td>• Various including calamine lotion</td>
<td>• No restrictions</td>
<td>GSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Sun protection</td>
<td>ACBS approved indication of photodermatoses (i.e. where skin protection should be prescribed)</td>
<td>Sun protection cream/ sprays/gels</td>
<td>• Various</td>
<td>• No restrictions</td>
<td>GSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Exceptions</td>
<td>Medication</td>
<td>Common brands</td>
<td>OTC restrictions</td>
<td>Classification</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 26. Mild to moderate hay fever/allergic rhinitis | No routine exceptions have been identified See earlier for general exceptions | Chlorphenamine 4mg tablets[^129] Chlorphenamine 2mg/5ml solution[^130] | Piriton®[^131] | • Children under 6 years - tablets, children under 1 years - solution  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
• Adult or children taking monoamine oxidase inhibitors within the last 14 days  
• Caution in epilepsy; raised intraocular pressure including glaucoma; prostatic hypertrophy; severe hypertension or cardiovascular disease; bronchitis, bronchiectasis or asthma; hepatic impairment; renal impairment  
• Rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, Lapp lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption | P |
| | | Loratadine 10mg tablets[^132] Loratadine 5mg/5ml syrup[^133] | Clarityn Allergy®[^134] | • Children under 6 years - tablets, children under 2 years - syrup  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
• Liver impairment  
• Rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, the Lapp lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption | GSL/P depending on pack sizes |
| | | Acrivastine 8mg capsules[^135] | Benadryl Allergy Relief®[^135] | • Children under 12 years  
• Adults over 65 years  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
• Renal impairment  
• Rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, the Lapp lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption | GSL/P depending on pack sizes |
<table>
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<th>OTC restrictions</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mild to moderate hay fever/allergic rhinitis continued | No routine exceptions have been identified  
See earlier for general exceptions | Cetirizine 10mg tablets\(^{136}\)  
Cetirizine 1mg/ml solution\(^{137}\) | • Zirtek Allergy Relief\(^{138}\)  
• Piriteze Allergy\(^{139}\)  
• Benadryl Allergy\(^{140}\) | • Children under 6 years - tablets, children under 2 years - solution (depending on the brand)  
• Renal impairment  
• Rare hereditary problems of fructose intolerance  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
• Epilepsy                                                                 | GSL/P depending on pack sizes                                                                 |
|                                               |                                                                           | Beclomethasone 0.05% nasal spray | • Beconase Hayfever\(^{141}\)                     | • Children under 18 years  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding                                                                 | GSL/P depending on pack sizes                                                                 |
|                                               |                                                                           | Sodium cromoglycate 2% eye drops   | • Allercrom\(^{142}\)  
• Optrex Hayfever Relief\(^{143}\) | • Children under 6 years  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding                                                                 | GSL                |
## Condition: Minor burns and scalds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Common brands</th>
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<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>See earlier for general exceptions</td>
<td>Antiseptic burn cream</td>
<td>Betadine® Dry Powder Spray(^{144})</td>
<td>Pregnancy, breastfeeding, Children under 2 years, Lithium therapy</td>
<td>GSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No routine exceptions have been identified</td>
<td>Cooling burn gel</td>
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<td>However more serious burns always require professional medical attention.</td>
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<td>Burns requiring hospital A&amp;E treatment include but are not limited to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• all chemical and electrical burns;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• large or deep burns;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• burns that cause white or charred skin;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• burns on the face, hands, arms, feet, legs, or genitals that cause blisters</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Germolene® Antiseptic Cream(^{145})</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Germolene® Antiseptic Ointment(^{146})</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Savlon® Antiseptic Cream(^{147})</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sudocrem® Antiseptic Healing Cream(^{148})</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Broken or infected skin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{144}\) • Pregnancy, breastfeeding, Children under 2 years, Lithium therapy
\(^{145}\) • Germolene® Antiseptic Cream
\(^{146}\) • Germolene® Antiseptic Ointment
\(^{147}\) • Savlon® Antiseptic Cream
\(^{148}\) • Sudocrem® Antiseptic Healing Cream
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Common brands</th>
<th>OTC restrictions</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28. Minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and fever, e.g. aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain</td>
<td>No routine exceptions have been identified. See earlier for general exceptions.</td>
<td>Paracetamol 500mg tablets&lt;sup&gt;22&lt;/sup&gt; and capsules&lt;sup&gt;23&lt;/sup&gt; Paracetamol 120mg/5ml suspension (from 3 months)/sugarfree&lt;sup&gt;24&lt;/sup&gt; Paracetamol 250mg/5ml suspension (from 6 years old)/sugar free&lt;sup&gt;25&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Anadin paracetamol®&lt;sup&gt;26&lt;/sup&gt; • Mandanol®&lt;sup&gt;27&lt;/sup&gt; • Panadol®&lt;sup&gt;28&lt;/sup&gt; • Hedex®&lt;sup&gt;29&lt;/sup&gt; • Calpol®&lt;sup&gt;30&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Long term conditions requiring regular pain relief • Children under 2 months Babies born before 37 weeks Babies weighing less than 4kg • Severe renal or severe hepatic impairment</td>
<td>GSL/P depending on pack size</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | | Ibuprofen 200mg, 400mg tablets, capsules, liquid capsules Ibuprofen 100mg/5ml liquid/suspension sugar free | • Anadin Ibuprofen®<sup>36</sup> • Nurofen®<sup>37</sup> • Calprofen®<sup>38</sup> • Cuprofen®<sup>39</sup> • Anadin Joint Pain®<sup>40</sup> | • Long term conditions requiring regular pain relief • Asthma • Unstable high blood pressure • Taking anticoagulants • Stomach ulcer, perforation or bleeding (active or history of) • Children under 3 month • Renal impairment • Hepatic impairment • Cardiac impairment • Pregnancy, breastfeeding • Not for use in chicken pox | GSL/P depending on pack size |

<p>| | | Co-codamol 8/500mg tablets&lt;sup&gt;149&lt;/sup&gt; capsules&lt;sup&gt;150&lt;/sup&gt; effervescent tablets&lt;sup&gt;151&lt;/sup&gt; | • Migraleve® Yellow tablets&lt;sup&gt;115&lt;/sup&gt; • Paracodol®&lt;sup&gt;116&lt;/sup&gt; | • Children under 12 years • Severe liver disease • Pregnancy, breastfeeding | P (up to 32 tablets) |</p>
<table>
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<th>Condition</th>
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<th>Medication</th>
<th>Common brands</th>
<th>OTC restrictions</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 28. Minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and fever, e.g. aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain | No routine exceptions have been identified  
See earlier for general exceptions | Ibuprofen 5% gel\(^{152}\) | • Fenbid\(^{153}\)  
• Ibuleve\(^{154}\)  
• Nurofen\(^{155}\) | • Children under 14 years  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
• Broken/infect ed skin | GSL                                                                 |
| 29. Mouth ulcers                                              | No routine exceptions have been identified  
See earlier for general exceptions | Lidocaine hydrochloride/ chlorocresol/ cetalkonium chloride  
Choline salicylate/ cetalkonium chloride  
Benzocaine | • Bonjela\(^{156}\)  
• Anbesol\(^{157}\)  
• Orajel\(^{158}\) | • Children under 16 years  
• Active peptic ulceration  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding | GSL                                                                 |
| 30. Nappy rash                                                 | No routine exceptions have been identified  
See earlier for general exceptions | Titanium dioxide/ titanium peroxide/ titanium salicylate  
Zinc oxide/ benzyl alcohol/ benzylbenzoate/ lanolin | • Metanium® Nappy Rash ointment\(^{159}\) | • No restrictions | GSL                                                                 |

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<th>Common brands</th>
<th>OTC restrictions</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31. Oral thrush</td>
<td>No routine exceptions have been identified&lt;br&gt;See earlier for general exceptions</td>
<td>Miconazole 2% oral gel 15g&lt;sup&gt;160&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Daktarin® Oral Gel&lt;sup&gt;160&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Children under 4 months&lt;br&gt;• Pregnancy, breastfeeding&lt;br&gt;• Patients taking warfarin&lt;br&gt;• Liver dysfunction</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Prevention of dental caries (dental decay)</td>
<td>No routine exceptions have been identified&lt;br&gt;Prescription only medicines need to be re-directed to the dentist to prescribe&lt;br&gt;See earlier for general exceptions</td>
<td>Mouthwashes such as chlorhexidine gluconate&lt;br&gt;Fluoride toothpaste</td>
<td>• Corsodyl®&lt;sup&gt;161&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Children under 12 years</td>
<td>GSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Ringworm/ Athletes foot</td>
<td>Lymphoedema or history of lower limb cellulitis&lt;br&gt;See earlier for general exceptions</td>
<td>Miconazole 2% cream&lt;sup&gt;162&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;Miconazole powder&lt;sup&gt;163&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;Miconazole 0.16% spray powder&lt;sup&gt;164&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Daktarin®&lt;sup&gt;162&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;• Daktarin Powder&lt;sup&gt;163&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;• Daktarinaktiv®&lt;sup&gt;164&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Diabetes&lt;br&gt;• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</td>
<td>P (cream)&lt;br&gt;GSL (powder)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Exceptions</td>
<td>Medication</td>
<td>Common brands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teething/mild toothache</td>
<td>No routine exceptions have been identified</td>
<td>Paracetamol 500mg tablets, capsules, effervescent tablets</td>
<td>• Anadin Paracetamol®²⁶</td>
<td>• Long term conditions requiring regular pain relief</td>
<td>GSL/P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paracetamol 120mg/5ml suspension (from 3 months) sugar free</td>
<td>• Mandanol®²⁷</td>
<td>• Children under 2 months</td>
<td>depending on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paracetamol 250mg/5ml suspension (from 6 years old) sugar free</td>
<td>• Panadol®²⁸</td>
<td>• Babies born before 37 weeks</td>
<td>pack size</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Hedex®²⁹</td>
<td>• Babies weighing less than 4 kg</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Calpol®³⁰</td>
<td>• Severe renal or severe hepatic impairment</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ibuprofen 200mg, 400mg capsules and tablets³¹-³⁴</td>
<td>• Anadin Ibuprofen®³⁶</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ibuprofen 100mg/5ml liquid sugar free³⁵</td>
<td>• Nurofen®³⁷</td>
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<td>• Calprofen®³⁸</td>
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<td>• Cuprofen®³⁹</td>
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<td>• Anadin Joint Pain®⁴⁰</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teething gel</td>
<td>• Bonjela®¹⁵⁶</td>
<td>• Babies under 2 months</td>
<td>GSL</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Dentinox® TeethingGel¹⁷⁰</td>
<td>• Heart disease</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Liver disease</td>
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<td>• Avoid the use in chicken pox</td>
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<td>• Asthma</td>
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<td>• Unstable high blood pressure</td>
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<td>• Taking anticoagulants</td>
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<td>• Stomach ulcer, perforation or bleeding (active or history of)</td>
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<td>• Children under 3 months</td>
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<td>• Renal impairment</td>
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<td>• Hepatic impairment</td>
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<td>• Cardiac impairment</td>
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<td>• Pregnancy, breastfeeding</td>
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<td>• Avoid the use in chicken pox</td>
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<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 35. Threadworms   | No routine exceptions have been identified                                  | Mebendazole 100mg tablets                      | • Ovex®¹⁷¹                                                                      | • Children under 2 years  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding                                                      | P              |
|                   | See earlier for general exceptions                                          |                                               |                                                                                  |                                                                                  |                |
| 36. Travel sickness| No routine exceptions have been identified                                  | Cinnarizine tablets 15mg                       | • Stugeron® Tablets 15mg¹⁷²                                                      | • Parkinsons  
• People with fructose or galactose intolerance, Lapp lactase deficiency, glucose- galactose malabsorption  
or sucrase- isomaltase insufficiency, should not take this medicine because it contains lactose and sucrose  
• Porphyria  
• Children under 5 years  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding                                                      | P              |
|                   | See earlier for general exceptions                                          |                                               |                                                                                  |                                                                                  |                |
|                   |                                                                             | Hyoscine hydrobromide tablets 150mcg           | • Joy-Rides® Tablets Chewable 150mcg¹⁷³  
• Kwells 300mcg tablets¹⁷⁴  
• Kwells Kids® Tablets 150mcg¹⁷⁵                                            | • Children under 3 years (Joyrides®) under 4 years (Kwells®)  
• Epilepsy  
• Glaucoma  
• Pregnancy, breastfeeding  
• Paralytic ileus, pyloric stenosis, prostatic enlargement  
• Myasthenia gravis                                                             | P              |
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<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 37. Warts and verrucae | No routine exceptions have been identified  
See earlier for general exceptions | Verruca gel such as those containing salicylic acid and lactic acid        | • Bazuka® Extra strength gel\[176\]  
• Bazuka® Gel\[177\]  
• Bazuka® Treatment Gel\[178\]  
• Bazuka Extra Strength® Treatment Gel\[179\] | • Diabetes patients  
• Face, neck, ano-genital area  
• Moles, birthmarks, hairy warts or skin lesions  
• Broken skin  
• Impaired peripheral blood circulation | P                |
|                   |                                                                             | Wart paint/ointment such as those containing salicylic acid and lactic acid | • Salactol Collodion\[180\]  
• Occlusal\[181\]  
• Salatac\[182\]  
• Verrugon® ointment\[183\] | • Diabetes patients  
• Face, neck, ano-genital area  
• Moles, birthmarks, hairy warts or skin lesions  
• Broken skin  
• Impaired peripheral blood circulation | P                |
|                   |                                                                             | Wart freeze treatments containing liquid freezing agents such as dimethyl ether, propane and isobutane | • Scholl® Freeze\[184\]  
• Bazuka® Sub Zero\[185\] | • Children under 4 years  
• Diabetes patients  
• Face, armpits, breasts, ano-genital area  
• Moles, birthmarks, hairy warts or skin lesions  
• Broken skin  
• Impaired peripheral blood circulation | GSL              |
References


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227. Over the counter items - GP guide to self care 2.1


227. Over the counter items - GP guide to self care 2.1


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Acknowledgements

Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group. Policy on Prescribing of Medicines that are Available for Purchase (Self care), August 2017. Available at: https://midessexccg.nhs.uk/your-health-services/medicines-optimisation/selfcare-materials

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Additional PrescQIPP resources

Quick reference guide   Patient information letter

Available here: www.prescqipp.info/our-resources/bulletins/bulletin-227-self-care-over-the-counter-items/

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