

Position Statement: Prescribing of paracetamol for minor, short term conditions.

As part of its self-care strategy, in line with National Guidance, NHS Mansfield and Ashfield and NHS Newark and Sherwood Clinical Commissioning Groups no longer supports the prescribing of paracetamol in minor short-term conditions in both adults and children.

The conditions listed below are examples of where paracetamol should be purchased over the counter (OTC) by the patient or their carer for their own self-care with appropriate advice if required.

Fever	Headache
Acute sore throat	General aches and pains
Coughs, colds, nasal congestion	Infrequent migraine
Back pain	Earache
Teething/toothache	Period pain
Sprains, strains, sporting injuries	Cuts
Self-limiting musculoskeletal pain	Bruising
Recovery after a simple medical procedure	This list is not exhaustive

This does not apply to patients who take paracetamol regularly for chronic or long term conditions.

Recommendations:

- Paracetamol should not be routinely prescribed for short term use. It is easily available to purchase from a pharmacy, local shop or supermarket.
- Patients that require regular paracetamol for chronic or long term conditions and have quantities of greater than 100 tablets or capsules per month should be reviewed to ensure that the quantity is appropriate for the individual patient. This is to help reduce stockpiling, reduce waste and to improve patient safety.
- Patients who have quantities of less than 32 on repeat prescription should have this removed from their repeat list and be encouraged to buy their paracetamol OTC.
- Patients who have paracetamol on their repeat prescription but do not order regularly should have their repeat stopped and they should be encouraged to buy OTC.
- Clinical judgement should be used when considering whether it is acceptable to ask a patient to purchase their medication. See the full National Guidelines (Link below) for general exceptions to self-care.

Rationale:

The National Guidance recommends the restriction of prescribing medications for a condition that is a minor illness and is suitable for self-care and treatment with items that can easily be purchased OTC from a pharmacy.

- Paracetamol is available to buy cheaply OTC, therefore for minor short term conditions, prescribers should offer patients advice on safe and effective self-care measures, directing them to appropriate sources of information (e.g. [NHS Choices](#) and [The Self Care Forum](#)) and using patient information leaflets if appropriate.
- Community pharmacists can advise on the treatment of a wide range of minor short-term conditions.
- Patients should be encouraged to keep a small supply of paracetamol in their own medicine cabinet so they are able to manage minor short term conditions at home.

Any patient queries or complaints should be directed to the CCGs Patient Engagement Team on 0800 028 3693; email NSHCCG.Pet-North@nhs.net or in writing to Patient Experience Team, NHS Newark and Sherwood Clinical Commissioning Group, Balderton Primary Care Centre, Lowfield Lane, Balderton, Nottinghamshire NG24 3HJ

Reference:

NHS England, NHS Clinical Commissioners. Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in Primary Care: Guidance for CCGs.
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-guidance-for-ccgs/> (accessed April 2018)