

## Do Not Prescribe Policy for Medicines for Dental Conditions on FP10

**Wirral CCG has agreed a policy to support national recommendations for the treatment of dental pain and infections. It is the recommendation of Wirral CCG that:**

- GPs should not accept requests from dentists to prescribe medicines that the dentist could prescribe.
- GPs should not accept requests from patients to issue FP10 prescriptions for items prescribed on a private prescription by their dentist during dental treatment as a private patient.
- Patients should seek a dental appointment if toothache persists for more than one or two days, and take painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen until they see the dentist.<sup>1</sup>
- GPs are advised that dental abscesses must be treated by dentists, and that antibiotic prescribing is not routinely recommended.
- Antibiotics are not routinely used to treat dental abscesses<sup>2</sup>, and therefore it is not recommended that GPs prescribe antibiotics while patients await definitive treatment.
- Patients can purchase painkillers, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen, from community pharmacies while awaiting dental treatment.
- Patients should be advised of self-care measures and signposted to purchase over the counter remedies for dental conditions where appropriate.

**This does not affect a GPs ability to prescribe dental products where they are deemed to be an appropriate part of the care that the GP is providing for a patient, and where the GP is happy to take responsibility for that prescribing decision.**

### Background

Medicines for dental conditions are usually more appropriately obtained via the patient's dentist, or should be purchased over the counter, rather than prescribed on FP10 prescriptions. It is recommended by NHS Choices that patients should seek a dental appointment if toothache persists for more than one or two days, and take painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen until they see the dentist.<sup>1</sup>

### Rationale for Non- Prescribing of Medicines for Dental Conditions on FP10

Prescribing medicines is an integral aspect of many dental treatment plans.<sup>3</sup> UK prescribing data indicates that dental products are prescribed by GPs. Also, GPs anecdotally report that they receive requests from dentists and patients to prescribe acute or repeat medicines for dental conditions. For example, high-strength prescription-only fluoride toothpastes, mouth ulcer healing preparations, antibiotics and analgesics.

GPs are responsible for all prescribing decisions they make and for any consequent monitoring that is needed as a result of the prescription given.<sup>4</sup> Dentists are responsible for assessing their patient's condition and prescribing within their competence.<sup>3</sup> If a dentist deems that a medicine is required to treat their patient's dental condition, and they are able

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to prescribe or direct the patient to that medicine via an appropriate route (see 'Obtaining medicines for dental conditions' below) then it is reasonable to expect the dentist to do so. In addition, some dental medicines require ongoing monitoring and clinical assessment by the dentist; therefore the dentist should retain clinical responsibility and prescribing.

The involvement of GPs in prescribing medicines for dental conditions is usually unnecessary, using up valuable appointments and GPs' time.

### Obtaining Medicines for Dental Conditions

There are various routes by which a dentist can prescribe medicines to their patients or direct them to appropriate medicines:

- Dentists can issue NHS prescriptions for medicines from the Dental Practitioners' Formulary (DPF, see current BNF) for treatment provided within an NHS contract.<sup>5</sup>
- Dentists can issue private prescriptions; legally they can do so for any medicine. However, ethically they should restrict prescribing to areas in which they are competent (i.e. medicines that are used in dentistry). When a person receives treatment as a private patient, they must always be given a private prescription even if the medicine required is on the DPF list.<sup>5</sup>
- Dentists, like other healthcare professionals, are also able to signpost patients to appropriate forms of self-care, e.g. direct them to a community pharmacy to purchase an over the counter analgesic.

### References:

1. NHS Choices - Toothache (Accessed via <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Toothache/Pages/Introduction.aspx> February 2016)
2. NHS Choices Dental – Abscesses (Accessed via <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Dental-abscess/Pages/Introduction.aspx> February 2016)
3. Guidance on prescribing medicines, General Dental Council, 30th September 2013. (Accessed via [www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org) February 2016).
4. Prescribing in General Practice, General Practitioners Committee, May 2013. (Accessed via <http://www.bma.org.uk> February 2016).
5. UKMi Medicines Q&A 193.3 When can dentists supply medicines? December 2012. (Accessed via [www.ukmi.nhs.uk](http://www.ukmi.nhs.uk) February 2016).