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Tel: 0151 651 0011

Date: 27th January 2020

Dear colleague

Prescribing of Medications Available to Purchase over the counter

NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is committed to delivering best value by ensuring that we use our resources well. Therefore, to help us to support the cost effective, evidence-based use of medicines, NHS Wirral CCG does not support the routine prescribing of health supplements and medications that can be bought over the counter for self-limiting, short-term illnesses and minor conditions.

By managing minor health needs through self-care, it will help to ease the pressure on the NHS. Self-care is about avoiding becoming ill and seeking help when needed. This is in line with the NHS England Guidance for CCGs 'Conditions for which over the counter medicines should not be routinely prescribed in primary care', which was published in March 2018: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines/conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed/>

What treatments and preparations are included?

- Pharmacy Only (P) and General Sales Lists (GSL) treatments that can be purchased over the counter from a pharmacy with or without advice.
- GSL treatments (including a patient information leaflet) that can be purchased from other retail outlets such as supermarkets, petrol stations, convenience and discount stores.
- Treatments that are used to treat a condition that is self-limiting and so does not need treatment as it will heal/resolve by itself; and/or
- Treatments that are used to treat a condition which lends itself to self-care, i.e. that the person suffering does not normally need to seek medical care and/or treatment for the condition.

Examples of treatments available over the counter which should no longer be routinely prescribed on the NHS in Wirral is treatment for dry eyes, bacterial conjunctivitis and lubricating products (conjunctivitis/dry eyes) for minor, short-term use. The prescribing of these products, within NHS Wirral CCG, is regularly monitored by NHS England so by working together we aim to reduce this prescribing and encourage patients to self-care and purchase recommended eye treatments, which are available over the counter, themselves.

For further guidance please refer to the NHS Wirral Self-Care policy:
https://www.wirralccg.nhs.uk/media/5131/final_selfcarepolicyv3aug18.pdf

Please can Wirral opticians be encouraged to follow these national recommendations and advise patients about the eye products in line with the recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Saket Jalan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Dr Saket Jalan

Clinical Lead for Urgent Care and Medicine's Management
Wirral Health and Care Commissioning