NHS
Kent and Medway

Briefing statement on Over the Counter (OTC) medicines.

In 2022/23 NHS Kent and Medway spent over £18million on medications for self-limiting, short-term illnesses and minor conditions that could potentially be bought over the counter.
NHS Kent and Medway is committed to delivering the best value to patients by ensuring that we use our resources well. Therefore, to help us to support implementation and ensure cost effective, evidence-based use of medicines, NHS Kent & Medway Integrated Medicines Optimisation Committee has issued the following statement.

Prescribing of items available Over the Counter (OTC) for self-care is NOT supported.

This is in line with the NHS England guidelines for conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care.
We appreciate your support in adopting this guidance and request patients are empowered to self-care for minor conditions, encouraging them to buy medicines where appropriate. This will help reduce the medicalisation of minor ailments, educate patients and free up scarce resources to be used more appropriately and ultimately, reduce pressures on your practice.
NHS England has previously written to all GP practices and ICB's to provide reassurance to prescribers, stating that where a prescriber decides, in line with local and/or national guidance, not to provide a prescription for an OTC medicine, practices will not be deemed to be in breach of their contract.
We have been working with the LPC (Local Pharmaceutical Committee) and our acute trust partners to ensure consistent messaging to patients from other health care professionals on the provision of OTC medicines.
To support the implementation of the NHS England guidance, NHS Kent and Medway has the following resources to be used:

- NHS Kent and Medway Position Statement on the prescribing of OTC medicines.
- Posters and digital screen images for display in practices and community pharmacies.
- A dedicated medicines support line for both clinicians and residents.
- Community pharmacy referral form to support signposting.

Your practice may also wish to consider signposting patients to the Community Pharmacy via the Consultation Service (CPCS) for self-care guidance. More information and training on this service can be provided at your request.
Thank you for your support and cooperation in this matter. Comments and queries can be sent by email to kmicb.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net .

Approved By: IMOC
Approval Date: July 2023
Renew Date: July 2025