

## Where can I find more information and support?

You can speak to the team at your local pharmacy. Your local pharmacist can give immediate advice and help you choose the most appropriate treatment. They can offer advice on over the counter products that should be kept in a medicine cabinet and also signpost you to other services if needed.

For information about your nearest pharmacy and opening times, visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

If your symptoms have not improved as expected or you start to feel a lot worse, you should do one or more of the following:

- Go back to the pharmacy for further advice
- Call NHS 111
- Contact your GP

You can find advice on treating minor illnesses yourself from:

Self-Care Forum: [www.selfcareforum.org](http://www.selfcareforum.org)

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or by phoning 111

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Medicine Cabinet List:  
[www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/your-medicine-cabinet](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/your-medicine-cabinet)

Find out more about this change, including who can continue to have over the counter medicines on prescription at:  
[www.nhs.uk/OTCmedicines](http://www.nhs.uk/OTCmedicines)

# Changes to prescribing over the counter (OTC) medicines



**Many medicines for pain relief and other minor illnesses are on sale at your local pharmacy or supermarket and are called 'over the counter' (OTC) medicines.**

Your GP, nurse or pharmacist will not generally give you a prescription for OTC medicines for a range of minor health concerns.

The team of health professionals at your local pharmacy can offer help and clinical advice to manage minor health concerns. If your symptoms suggest it is more serious, they will help you get the care you need.

## What is changing?

A range of medicines that are available to buy over the counter from pharmacies and supermarkets are no longer routinely prescribed by GP surgeries, as they have been in the past.

These are medicines associated with a number of minor, short term health conditions which either get better by themselves or can be easily self-treated.

## Which minor illnesses are included?

The change applies to medicines for a total of 35 conditions. These include coughs, colds, acute sore throat, infrequent cold sores of the lip, dry eyes and mild to moderate hay fever.

Other minor illnesses included are cradle cap, dandruff, sore tired eyes, excessive sweating, insect bites and stings, infrequent constipation, mild cystitis and mouth ulcers.

The full list is available on

[www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/medicines/why-cant-i-get-prescription-over-counter-medicine](http://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/medicines/why-cant-i-get-prescription-over-counter-medicine)

GPs, nurses or pharmacists will also generally no longer prescribe probiotics, some vitamins and minerals. You can get these from eating a healthy, varied and balanced diet or buy them at your pharmacy or supermarket.

## Why is City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) making this change?

The changes in City and Hackney follow national and local consultations and NHS England guidance.

As a commissioner (buyer) of health services and treatment, we have a duty to plan and prioritise fairly and use the available public money to achieve the maximum health benefit for everyone living in City and Hackney.

The NHS in City and Hackney, pays around £2.6million each year for OTC medicines given on prescriptions. We can put this money to better use to support more serious health conditions such as cancer, diabetes and mental health problems.

What the NHS pays for these over the counter products on prescriptions is often higher than when they are bought from a pharmacy or supermarket.

This is because other fees are added, such as medical consultation and dispensing fees, when they are prescribed on the NHS.

These changes will also help to ease some of the pressure on GP surgeries so doctors and other healthcare professionals can concentrate on patients with more serious or long term conditions.

## Will there be any exceptions?

In some circumstances you may still be prescribed a medicine for a condition on the list:

- If you need the over the counter medicines for a long-term, or complex condition.
- If the prescriber thinks that your wellbeing could be affected because of mental health problems or severe social vulnerability.

The reason varies for each condition. Your GP, nurse or pharmacist will speak to you if this affects you.

The full list of exceptions can be found at [www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/medicines/why-cant-i-get-prescription-over-counter-medicine/#exceptions](http://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/medicines/why-cant-i-get-prescription-over-counter-medicine/#exceptions)

## How much do these medicines cost over the counter?

The price of these items may vary but will range from around £0.35p for a small pack of paracetamol to around £5 for branded sun-protection products.

Speak to staff at your local pharmacy to discuss the range of medicines available.

