

## Self care for minor ailments - changes in prescribing

### Why are we asking you to buy paracetamol?

The NHS belongs to everybody and the CCG must ensure that its resources are used in the best possible way for all patients. We are therefore asking patients not to request paracetamol on prescription from their GP unless required for chronic pain management and to purchase it instead. We think asking you to self-care in this way is a fair way of utilising resources wisely as paracetamol tablets and liquid can be purchased in pharmacies and supermarkets at a very low cost. Results from our public survey shows that the vast majority of people agree.

### Will this affect me if I take paracetamol regularly for pain management?

This won't affect you if you are taking paracetamol regularly as part of a chronic pain management plan or paracetamol with codeine (co-codamol) only available on prescription. In this case your GP will continue to prescribe these in the quantities appropriate for you.

### Will I still be able to get other medicines on prescription that can be bought?

Most other OTC meds will still be available on prescription e.g. hay fever tablets although in most cases it is cheaper to buy these compared to a prescription charge and your community pharmacist will be able to give you expert advice on treatment.

However, some treatments will no longer be available on prescriptions that aren't proven to be clinically effective, because again, it is not good use of NHS funds. You can purchase these from community pharmacies or buy from outlets such as health food shops or supermarkets depending on the item. The full list can be found at [www.lmsg.nhs.uk](http://www.lmsg.nhs.uk)

### Who will be able to advise me on common ailments?

Community Pharmacists are best placed to help and advise you regarding suitable treatments for common ailments. Using your community pharmacist will save on GP appointment time and allow them to deal with more urgent problems. However if you are worried you can still make an appointment to see your GP.

### Will this affect me if I have a pre-paid certificate?

If you have a pre-paid certificate you will also be asked to purchase your own paracetamol for common ailments. However, if you need regular paracetamol for management of chronic pain, then this will be covered by your pre-paid certificate.



### **What will happen if I have paracetamol on repeat prescription but I don't have a chronic pain problem?**

Your GP may ask you to buy paracetamol if it is not required regularly. They may also remove it from your repeat prescription and only ask you to order it when you need it. You can help by letting your GP practice know if paracetamol is on your repeat prescription and you don't take it regularly.

You should never share any medicines that you receive on prescription with other people including paracetamol.

### **Is paracetamol on prescription better quality than what you can buy?**

No, this is not the case because all licensed medicines bought over the counter must go through detailed safety and quality tests. There should be no noticeable difference in the effect on pain or fever between paracetamol that you can buy and that the ones supplied on prescription.

### **Schools and nurseries**

If your child has a short term self-limiting illness but is well enough to go to school or nursery and you think paracetamol will help relieve their symptoms, give the dose immediately prior to the start of the school/nursery day. In children over 6 months of age the pain relieving effect of the paracetamol should last approximately 6 hours by which time many children will have returned home and you can administer a further dose if necessary. Alternatively, ibuprofen can be given for mild to moderate pain, or soft tissue injuries and the effect will last approximately 8 hours. These can both be purchased from your community pharmacy or local supermarket. Please don't ask your GP to prescribe paracetamol or ibuprofen "just in case" for this purpose.

### **Who does this advice not apply to?**

This advice does not apply to you if your child receives paracetamol or another analgesic on prescription for long term management of chronic pain. If this is the case please refer to your school's Medicine Policy.

Always try and time when you give your child medicines so that they don't have to be taken at school or nursery.

Always follow the advice on the label to make sure you give your child the correct dose for their age.

### **What if I can't get to a shop easily to buy paracetamol when I am not feeling well?**

Be prepared by keeping some paracetamol in your medicines cabinet at home. It can be bought from pharmacies and many shops and supermarkets.