

NHS England Drugs of low clinical priority - Patient FAQ

1) Who are NHS England and what do they do?

NHS England leads the National Health Service (NHS) in England. They are responsible for the budgets and setting the priorities and direction of the NHS.

2) Why can't I get my medication on an NHS prescription anymore?

NHS England produced a consultation document entitled "Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: A Consultation on guidance for CCGs". This consultation was open to the public for a period of time. From the data collected, NHS England produced a guidance for CCGs stating these items were of 'low clinical priority' and should not be prescribed.

3) What medications are included in the 'low clinical priority' list?

Category	Medications
Items of low clinical effectiveness, where there is a lack of evidence of clinical effectiveness or there are significant safety concerns	Co-proxamol, dosulepin, glucosamine/chondroitin, Complementary therapies (Herbal and homeopathy) Lidocaine plasters, Lutein and antioxidants, Omega 3 fatty acids, Rubefacients (excluding topical NSAIDs)
Items which are clinically effective but where more cost-effective products are available, This category includes products that have been subject to excessive manufacturer price increases resulting in them becoming less cost-effective than they previously were.	Doxazosin Modified release tablets, immediate release fentanyl (lozenges, sublingual tablets, spray) Liothyronine, Oxycodone and Naloxone Combination Product (Targinact), Paracetamol and Tramadol Combination Product (Tramacet), Perindopril Arginine, Once Daily Tadalafil, Trimipramine
Items which are clinically effective but, due to the nature of the product, are deemed a low priority for NHS funding	Travel vaccines Gluten free foods

4) Why are NHS England recommending not to prescribe these?

Last year 1.1 billion prescription items were dispensed in community Pharmacies at a cost of £9.2billion. This growing cost means the NHS needs to achieve effective outcomes from the money it spends. Often patients are receiving medicines that have no evidence of effectiveness, the benefits over a more cost effective product are very low, or in some cases there is evidence of safety concerns. NHS England are also supporting patients to take an active role in their own care by encouraging them to purchase medication OTC (Over the counter) where available. NHS England are supporting Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in ensuring effective prescribing to deliver the best patient outcomes from the medicines used.

5) What is Mid Essex CCG doing about the 'Drugs of low clinical priority'?

We have prescribing policy statements in place for all these drugs, and are supporting GPs to implement them fully.

We are having to make some very difficult decisions to ensure we continue using public money in the most effective way to fund services based on the greatest need for our wider community. We therefore have to prioritise prescribing and services based on clinical need and evidence-based outcomes for patients whilst managing the continuing cost pressures.

6) What does this mean for my medications?

You may be contacted by your practice regarding the ongoing prescribing of any of the items listed above.

Depending on the item and prescribing recommendations you may be asked to purchase the item in future or be switched to an alternative prescribed medication to meet your clinical needs.

7) I have a medical exemption. Can I still get these on prescription?

If you have medical exemption, depending on the drug, you may be switched to a prescribed alternative.

Unfortunately, if you are being prescribed an item where the recommendation is for you to purchase it then you will no longer be able to have prescriptions for that item. Some items may be for conditions that are unrelated to the condition for which you have medical exemption for and so should be purchased rather than prescribed.

8) Does this apply to under 16s?

Yes, it applies to all patients, regardless of age. If it is an item that is recommended for purchasing then the parent/guardian/carer has the responsibility for providing it.

9) If I can no longer get my medication from my GP, where can I get it?

Those items that are recommended for patients to self-purchase can be purchased from pharmacies, supermarkets, health food shops depending on what the item is.

10) Who can I contact if I have further queries about this?

Please contact the Mid Essex CCG Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) by calling 01245 459459 (office hours 9am-5pm, with confidential voicemail available out of hours) or by emailing meccg.patientexperience@nhs.net

More information about PALS and a postal address are available from the CCG website at <http://midessexccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/patient-advice-and-liaison-service-pals>