**Prescribing ‘Over-the-Counter’ Medicines is Changing**

Shropshire NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has adopted the NHS England Self Care policy to help our local NHS save money and use it for other NHS treatments.

In Shropshire, we have a fixed amount of money to spend each year; however we spent £1 million on prescriptions for medicines which can be bought over-the-counter during last year alone. These medicines can be bought by patients at a small cost from a pharmacy or supermarket. If this money was reinvested in other areas it could fund 10 GPs or 33 specialist nurses.

The NHS belongs to everybody and together we must ensure that its limited resources are used in the best possible way for all patients. Your GP practice is a member of the Shropshire CCG which is introducing these new prescribing policies to improve efficiency and reduce waste.

These measures will ensure we can continue to protect NHS services for the population of Shropshire both now and in the future.

**Who should I speak to if I am concerned about my condition or symptoms?**

If you are concerned about your condition or symptoms, you should contact your local pharmacist in the first instance.

Pharmacists are qualified health professionals and have the knowledge and skills to help and advise you on the best course of action. You may not need to see a doctor, but can get helpful advice or buy a treatment for your condition. Hence you could save time and start to feel better quicker.

Pharmacies are accessible and convenient as many of them are open late nights and weekends. They can be found in local communities, on the high street, in some supermarkets and in shopping centres.

There is also no need for an appointment to speak to a pharmacist; just pop in any time and they will be happy to help you. If you can’t get to your local pharmacy yourself you could call or ask someone to go for you. Details of your local pharmacies and their opening times can be found at: [www.nhs.uk/chemist](http://www.nhs.uk/chemist).

**What is Self Care?**

Self Care can be described as the action an individual takes for themselves to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing*.*

There are certain types of medicines and treatments used for ‘minor conditions’ which fall under Self Care. Minor conditions are generally not a serious health problem and can be treated with over-the-counter medicines available from your local pharmacy, supermarket or other stores.

Examples of **minor conditions** that do not require a visit to your doctor, or a prescription, and that your local pharmacist can help you with, include:

**Acute sore throat
Conjunctivitis
Coughs, colds and nasal congestion
Cradle cap
Dandruff
Diarrhoea (adults)
Dry eyes/sore tired eyes
Earwax
Excessive sweating
Haemorrhoids
Head lice
Indigestion and heartburn
Infant colic
Infrequent cold sores of the lip
Infrequent constipation
Infrequent migraine
Insect bites and stings
Mild acne
Minor burns and scalds
Mild cystitis
Mild dry skin/sunburn
Mild irritant dermatitis
Mild to moderate hay fever
Minor pain, discomfort and fever (e.g. headache, period pain, back pain)
Mouth ulcers
Nappy rash
Oral thrush
Prevention of tooth decay
Ringworm/athlete’s foot
Sun protection
Teething/mild toothache
Threadworms
Travel sickness
Warts and verrucae**

This list is not exhaustive and your local pharmacist may be able to help you with other minor conditions too.

If you are not sure whether your condition is minor or serious, speak to your pharmacist first. By asking questions, your pharmacist will be able to advise if you need to see a doctor or not.