

## Position statement on the prescribing of treatment for hay fever / seasonal rhinitis

**As part of its self-care strategy, in line with National Guidance, NHS Doncaster no longer supports the prescribing of antihistamines, nasal sprays and eye drops for the treatment of hay fever / seasonal rhinitis on prescription.**

**Patients should be advised to purchase these products over the counter (OTC).**

### Rationale:

The National Guidance recommends that prescriptions to treat mild to moderate hay fever should not be routinely offered as the condition is appropriate for self-care.

- Hay fever is a common allergic condition that affects up to one in five people.
- The severity of symptoms can vary, some people need medication to manage their symptoms and others can manage their condition by avoiding triggers. If symptomatic treatment is needed, a wide range of medications can be purchased from community pharmacies and supermarkets.
- These medications are usually cheaper than a prescription and can be purchased without seeing a GP.

### Recommendations:

- All patients currently prescribed a treatment for hay fever / seasonal rhinitis should be reviewed with a view to stopping prescribing and recommending an OTC product for self-care.
- Prescribers should advise patients on safe and effective self-care measures, directing them to appropriate sources of information (e.g. [NHS Choices](#) and [The Self Care Forum](#)) and using patient information leaflets if appropriate.
- Consider prescribing if:
  - Allergic symptoms are severe and have not responded to various OTC medication or trigger avoidance.
  - There is a licensing restriction on the sale of OTC medication. This can be checked using the summary of product characteristics, available at [www.medicines.org.uk](http://www.medicines.org.uk)
  - The patient has chronic symptoms which require treatment throughout the year.
- Clinical judgement should be used when considering whether it is acceptable to ask a patient to purchase their medication. See the full National Guidelines (link listed below) for general exceptions to self-care.

**Any patient queries or complaints should be directed to NHS England,**

**Telephone: 0300 311 22 33 or email: [england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)**

### Reference

1. NHS England, NHS Clinical Commissioners. Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in Primary Care: Guidance for CCGs. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-guidance-for-cggs/> (accessed May 2023)