

Requests for Unlicensed Products- Information for Healthcare Professional colleagues

Summary

Patients often present at their GP practice requesting unlicensed products which can be purchased 'over the counter'. On some occasions this can be following the advice of other healthcare professionals.

Medicines which are provided on prescription by the NHS are expected to have gone through a number of steps to provide assurance on safety and cost effectiveness.

Therefore, the CCG would request that patients are not directed to GP practices to ask for unlicensed preparations on an FP10 to ensure patients are provided with consistent advice from all Healthcare Professionals.

Background

Over the counter (OTC) products

Patients often present at their GP practice requesting unlicensed products such as fish oils, glucosamine and other vitamins and health supplements on prescription. On some occasions this can be following the advice of other healthcare professionals.

Medicines which are provided on prescription by the NHS are expected to have gone through a number of steps to provide assurance on safety and cost effectiveness, be included within GP clinical systems (so interactions can be identified) and be available through a recognised supply chain.

1. Medicines are licensed through the MHRA process and their details are available on the Medicines.org web site
<http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/glossary?view=130>
2. A number of alternative products are reviewed through the Advisory Council on Borderline Substances (ACBS) process and listed in the BNF
<https://www.medicinescomplete.com/mc/bnf/current/>
3. Costs for the majority of the above products are set out in the NHS Drug tariff
http://www.ppa.org.uk/ppa/edt_intro.htm
4. Once items have been through this route, they are considered by the local prescribing groups and committees and a decision made whether these should be recommended for use locally with or without any restriction. Information on prescribing in East Kent is available on the following web site
<http://www.canterburycoastalccg.nhs.uk/about-us/prescribing-advice/>

Issued on behalf of: East Kent Prescribing Group (Representing Ashford CCG, Canterbury and Coastal CCG, South Kent Coast CCG and Thanet CCG)

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The following are specifically **not** recommended as they have not been through any of the steps above (but this list is not exhaustive)

- Glucosamine
- Chondroitin
- Fish Oil
- iCAPs and similar products
- Over the Counter (OTC) multivitamins and mineral preparations
- Green lipped mussel extracts

Self-care is promoted by the NHS as it is often quicker to obtain supplies and these items are usually available at relatively low cost.

Please note, costs for medicines which are unlicensed or not approved by the ACBS process may be uncontrolled. Prescriptions in excess of £1000 for a month's supply of an unlicensed preparation are seen at regular intervals. All NHS staff have a duty to ensure best use of NHS resources.

Therefore, the CCG would request that patients are not directed to GP practices to ask for unlicensed preparations on an FP10 to ensure patients are provided with consistent advice from all Healthcare Professionals.