Changes to the treatment of minor ailments -

Earlier this year our local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) – NHS West Leicestershire CCG reviewed how people accessed over the counter medicines for the short term treatment of minor ailments.  The sorts of conditions they reviewed included headaches, indigestion, head lice, travel sickness, hay fever, diarrhoea and insect bites and stings. They also reviewed Vitamin D supplements and specialised infant formula which can be prescribed for babies with reflux or lactose intolerance. The review helped them to understand how people would be affected if they had to buy these types of medicines, that are easily bought over the counter, instead of requesting a prescription.

The review revealed that the majority of people do already buy their own medicines to treat minor ailments and most people are willing or very willing to buy medicines for minor ailments.

There were some people who did have concerns about different aspects of medicines and managing their use of them.

The CCG thinks that the NHS belongs to everybody and that resources need to be used wisely and the results of our review show that most patients feel the same way.  Therefore GPs are being asked to no longer prescribe medicines on prescription for the short term treatment of minor ailments, low dose vitamin D supplements for prevention of deficiency and some specialised infant formulas. Patients will be asked to purchase them over the counter instead.  The CCG is also asking patients not to request these items on their prescription.

The review also revealed that many people already feel that their community pharmacist is their first point of contact.  They support them with a range of ailments and they prefer to talk to them about minor conditions savings GP appointment time for more urgent problems.

Community Pharmacists are best placed to help and advise you regarding suitable treatments for common ailments.  The pharmacist will check the medicine is appropriate for you and your health problem. They will ask questions to ensure there is no reason why you should not use the medicine.

By asking people to self-care in this way, and we know that most people already do, is a fair way of utilising resources wisely as most of these items can be purchased in pharmacies and supermarkets at a low cost, but cost the NHS more to provide on a prescription.  It will also free up valuable GP and nurse time, which can be used to deal with more complex or serious health needs.

However if you are worried or your symptoms get worse or persist you can still make an appointment to see your GP.

The CCG has put together a range of information to support them which is available by visiting [www.westleicestershireccg.nhs.uk](http://www.westleicestershireccg.nhs.uk/) or more information is available at: visit <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Medicinesinfo/Pages/Introduction.aspx>]

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