

HERBAL AND HOMEOPATHY REMEDIES

Homeopathy is based on the principle 'like cures like'. It involves treating the individual with highly diluted substances.

Recommendations

These recommendations are in line with NHS ENGLAND's guidance on items that should not routinely be prescribed in primary care

- Herbal and Homeopathy products should not be prescribed to patients
- If previously prescribed, they should be stopped and patients advised to buy over the counter in pharmacies or in health shops.

Rationale

- In 2010 House of Commons Science and Technology Committee found that the use of homeopathy was not evidence-based, and any benefits to patients were due to placebo effect. They recommended that homeopathy should not be funded on the NHS and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) should stop licensing homeopathic products.
- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) does not recommend homeopathy for the treatment of any health condition.
- NHS England have categorised Homeopathy as products of low clinical effectiveness, where there is a lack of robust evidence of clinical effectiveness or there are significant safety concerns.
- The Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) review in October 2017 found that there was no clear or robust evidence base to support the use of homeopathy in the NHS.

- Most homeopathic remedies will still be available to patients as they can be bought over-the-counter from a chemist or health food shop.
- NHS England have categorised Herbal treatments as products of low clinical effectiveness, where there is a lack of robust evidence of clinical effectiveness or there are significant safety concerns.
- Although Herbal treatments must be granted a traditional herbal registration (THR) before they can be marketed as an herbal medicine in the UK, under a THR there is no requirement to prove scientifically that a product works, the registration is based on longstanding use of the product as a traditional medicine.
- Most herbal treatments are still available to patients as they can be bought over-the-counter from a chemist or health food shop

If you need any further information;

- Ask your pharmacist
- NHS Choices - www.nhs.uk
- Patient UK - www.patient.co.uk

References:

1. NHS England: Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed-in-pc-ccg-guidance.pdf>
2. Specialist Pharmacy Service: Clinical evidence for homeopathy. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/sps-homeopathy.pdf>