

## Position statement on the prescribing of topical preparations for the treatment of haemorrhoids on prescription

**In line with NHS England's guidance on conditions for which over-the-counter items should not be routinely prescribed, SW London CCGs\* do not support the routine prescribing of topical preparations for the treatment of haemorrhoids on prescription except in the following circumstances:**

- **Patients with persistent and severe symptoms, or symptoms that have failed to resolve despite use of over-the-counter preparations**
- **Patients in whom over-the-counter preparations to manage haemorrhoids are not suitable**

Examples of preparations to treat haemorrhoids include Germoloids®, Anusol® (cream, suppositories, ointment), Anusol HC®, Anusol Plus HC®, Preparation H®. Other similar and generic preparations for haemorrhoids are also available.

### Rationale

- Most cases of haemorrhoids can be managed with simple dietary and lifestyle changes to aid healing and prevent recurrence. <sup>1,2</sup>
- If symptomatic treatment to reduce itching and discomfort 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.<sup>1</sup>

### References

1. PrescQipp B91 Self-care: Haemorrhoid Treatment <https://www.prescqipp.info/resources/category/148-self-care-haemorrhoid-treatments>
2. NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries Haemorrhoids (accessed 2/3/17) <https://cks.nice.org.uk/haemorrhoids>
3. NHS Choices website, Haemorrhoids (Piles) (accessed 2/3/17) <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/haemorrhoids/pages/what-is-it-page.aspx>
4. PrescQipp Self Care webkit <https://www.prescqipp.info/resources/category/141-self-care-webkit>

Further information available from:

- NHS England. 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-ccgs/> Updated 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

\*SWL CCGs (NHS Croydon CCG, NHS Kingston CCG, NHS Merton CCG, NHS Richmond CCG, NHS Sutton CCG and NHS Wandsworth CCG) position statement on prescribing of treatments for haemorrhoids

## Guidance and recommendations for clinicians

- Advise patients on safe and effective self-care measures. You may wish to provide the patient with a 'non-prescription' sheet or a patient information leaflet to promote education about self-limiting conditions.
- Consider prescribing in the following circumstances:
  - Patients with persistent and severe symptoms
  - Patients whose symptoms have failed to improve after adequate use of over-the-counter preparations and lifestyle changes
  - Patients in whom over-the-counter medication to manage haemorrhoids is not suitable
- Advise patients to seek medical advice in the following circumstances: <sup>1,3</sup>
  - Persistent piles (haemorrhoids)
  - Severe symptoms
  - If experiencing pain
  - If stools appear black and tarry

## Guidance for patients, carers and guardians

- If you think you have haemorrhoids for the first time (usual symptoms include bleeding after passing a stool where the blood is usually bright red, itchy bottom, a lump hanging down outside of the anus, mucus discharge after passing a stool, soreness, redness and swelling around your anus<sup>3</sup>) and/or you have any undiagnosed pain and/or rectal bleeding, you should see your GP to confirm the diagnosis and rule out any other conditions.
- Once you have been diagnosed with haemorrhoids, you can keep medications at home to treat your symptoms in a timely manner, and avoid further unnecessary trips to see your doctor.<sup>4</sup>
- Medication for haemorrhoids can often be purchased cheaper than a prescription, from a community pharmacy or a supermarket. These include creams, ointments and suppositories.<sup>3,4</sup>
- Community pharmacists can offer advice on how to manage symptoms associated with haemorrhoids, when to seek medical advice, and what to use if you are on other medication. You do not need to make an appointment to see the pharmacist, and many pharmacies are open late nights and at the weekend when the doctor's surgery is closed.<sup>4</sup>
- You should see your GP:
  - If you have persistent and severe symptoms (including pain and rectal bleeding)
  - If over-the-counter medication to manage symptoms of haemorrhoids is not suitable for you
  - If you have already tried over-the-counter medication and your symptoms have not improved
  - If you have severe pain or your stools appear black and tarry

### For further information see:

- Piles (Haemorrhoids) - includes information on symptoms, avoidance methods and overview of treatment options. <http://patient.info/health/piles-haemorrhoids>
- NHS Choices - includes information on symptoms, causes, diagnosis, treatment and prevention. <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/haemorrhoids/pages/what-is-it-page.aspx>

**The NHS belongs to YOU, use it responsibly**