

Rationale

Dandruff is a common skin condition. It can present as mild scaling on the scalp with itching. This can be easily treated long term with over the counter anti-fungal shampoos. Dandruff is not harmful or contagious and a GP appointment is unnecessary.

Recommendations for clinicians

- Provide the patient with a 'non-prescription' sheet or a patient information leaflet to promote education about self-limiting conditions suitable for self-care when appropriate.
- Advise patients on safe and effective self-care measures.
 - Dandruff will resolve with use of specific anti-fungal shampoos containing salicylic acid, coal tar, selenium sulphide, ketoconazole and zinc pyrithione.
 - Shampoos should be left on for at least 5 minutes before rinsing off
 - Stress and cold weather may make it worse
 - Frequency of use of shampoo can be reduced once dandruff improves but it will probably come back if stopped completely.
- Advise patients to seek medical attention and consider treatment with a prescription in the following circumstances:
 - Over the counter treatments have not improved dandruff after a month of use.
 - Scalp is very itchy, red or swollen, amount of dandruff increases.
 - Patient is immunocompromised.

Example of products available to buy over the counter*

Ketoconazole - **Not licensed for under 16 years (~£6.40 for 60ml)**

Selenium disulfide (Selsun) – **Not licensed for under 5 years (~£1.60 for 50ml)**

Coal Tar solution 4% scalp shampoo – **Not licensed for children under 12 years (~£5.49 for 150ml)**

For further information see Self-care forum <http://www.selfcareforum.org/>, NHS UK <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>, Patient UK <https://patient.info/>

*Prices correct at time of writing and are subject to change

