

Rationale

Acne is a common skin condition usually presented on the face. This can be managed long term with over the counter with creams, lotions and gels. Acne cannot be cured but it can be controlled with treatment. Treatments can take up to 3 months to work.

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 of safe and effective self-care measures:
 - Do not wash the area more than twice a day
 - Use mild soap or cleanser with lukewarm water
 - Do not squeeze or 'clean out' spots. Avoid too much make up.
 - If presented with dry skin, use water-base emollient
 - Regular exercise and showers to wash away sweat and excess sebum from skin and hair
- Advise patients to seek medical attention and consider treatment with a prescription in the following circumstances:
 - Acne appears on other parts of the body such as chest, back
 - Over the counter products are not working and patient's mood is affected
 - Nodules or cysts appear, which will need different treatment to avoid scarring.

Example of products available to buy over the counter*

Benzoyl peroxide Gel/Wash - **Not licensed for under 16 years (~£10.00 for 30-50g)**

Niacinamide (Freederm) – **Not licensed for under 12 years (~£6.50 for 25g)**

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

