

Self Care Briefing – Minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and fever



Rationale

- In most cases headaches, period pain, mild fever and back pain can be treated at home with over-the-counter painkillers and lifestyle changes, such as getting more rest and drinking enough fluids. Examples of conditions where patients should be encouraged to self-care include: headaches, colds, fever, earaches, teething, period pain, cuts, self-limiting musculoskeletal pain, sprains, bruising, toothache, sinusitis/nasal congestion, recovery after a simple medical procedure, aches and pains and sore throat.

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. See: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/10-ways-to-ease-pain/>; <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/your-medicine-cabinet>
- Advise patients of safe and effective self-care measures:
 - Consult a pharmacist for advice as to which treatment is most suitable
 - Do some gentle exercise or distract yourself
 - Breathe right and concentrate on your breathing to ease pain and relax
- Patients should seek medical attention if:
 - Pain keeps coming back, worsens or if painkillers do not work
 - Flu like symptoms don't improve after 7 days
 - If swelling is present around the ear, earache in both ears, earache for more than 3 days, hearing loss or a change in hearing
 - Severe period pain or your normal pattern of your periods changes
 - There are signs of infection i.e. redness, severe pain, feeling hot and swollen at site of pain

Example of products available to buy over the counter*

Paracetamol (tablets) - **Not licensed for under 10 years (25p-£3 for 16 tablets/capsules)**

Paracetamol (suspension) – **Not licensed for under 2 months (£2.50-£4.50 for 100ml)**

Ibuprofen (tablets) – **Not licensed under the age of 12 years. (35p-£4.00 for 16 tablets/capsules)**

Ibuprofen (suspension) – **Not licensed for under 3 months (£2.50-£4.00 for 100ml)**

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

