

Position statement on the prescribing for acute diarrhoea for adults

Following the NHS England guidance 'Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs' (March 2018) the following changes to prescribing have been agreed across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge.

From 16 March 2021
Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Groups (BHR CCGS) no longer supports the prescribing of treatment for ACUTE diarrhoea for adults

Decision

The decision to stop treatment for acute diarrhoea applies to ALL adult patients across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge unless the patient fall into one of the exceptions listed below.

Please note that this does not affect treatment for **chronic diarrhoea**.

If symptoms are not improving or responding to treatment, then patients should be encouraged to seek further advice from a pharmacy, NHS app, NHS website or NHS 111. For care home patients: access to treatment should be considered via a care home policy.

Exceptions

BHR CCGs have agreed an exception to this recommendation, where they accept that prescribing should continue in primary care for:

- The clinician considers that the patient's ability to self-manage is compromised as a consequence of significant vulnerability to the extent that their health and/or wellbeing could be adversely affected, if reliant on self-care. Consideration should also be given to safeguarding issues

This decision was made because:

- Diarrhoea normally affects most people from time to time and is usually nothing to worry about. However, it can take a few days to a week to clear up
- Acute diarrhoea is usually caused by a bacterial or viral infection and other causes include drugs, anxiety or a food allergy
- Over the counter treatments can help replace lost fluids (e.g. rehydration sachets) or reduce bowel motions (e.g. loperamide). If patients want to use these treatments, they are widely available to purchase at reasonable cost at supermarkets, pharmacies and other retailers
- BHR CCGs have a duty to spend taxpayer's money wisely, to make sure they get the best value possible – especially when NHS funding is being severely squeezed and more patients are being seen with more complex health issues than ever before

References

1. NHS website: diarrhoea and vomiting- last reviewed: 7 December 2020. Page accessed 23 April 2021 <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diarrhoea-and-vomiting/>
2. NHS England and NHS Clinical Commissioners. Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs, March 2018. Publishing approval reference 07851 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-guidance-for-CCGs/>