



Prescribing Policy for Prescription only (POM) Antihistamines

North East Essex CCG does not support the prescribing of POM antihistamines where an over – the – counter (OTC) or Pharmacy (P) preparation is appropriate for the treatment of urticaria, pruritus, itching associated with dermatoses such as atopic eczema, pruritus associated with systemic causes e.g. obstructive jaundice, allergic rhinitis, hayfever and any off – label use

‘Sedating’ / First Generation Antihistamines		‘Non-Sedating’ / Second Generation Antihistamines	
Do NOT prescribe	Self – Care Pharmacy Option	Do NOT Prescribe	Self – Care OTC/Pharmacy option
Alimemazine (tablets & liquids) (POM)	Chlorphenamine (tablets & liquids), Promethazine (tablets & liquids), Clemastine(tablets), Cyproheptadine(tablets)	Loratadine (tablets, orodispersible/melts & liquids) (OTC)	Loratadine (tablets, orodispersible/melts & liquids)
Chlorphenamine (tablets & liquids) (P)		Cetirizine (tablets & liquids) (OTC)	Cetirizine(tablets & liquids)
Promethazine (tablets & liquids) (P)		Desloratadine (metabolite of loratadine) (tablets & liquids) (POM)	Loratadine (tablets, orodispersible/melts & liquids)
Clemastine (tablets)(P)		Levocetirizine (isomer of cetirizine) (tablets & liquids) (POM)	Cetirizine(tablets & liquids)
Cyproheptadine (tablets)(P)		Bilastine (metabolite of loratadine) (tablets) (POM)	Loratadine (tablets, orodispersible/melts & liquids)
Hydroxyzine (tablets) (POM)		Fexofenadine tablets (POM)	Loratadine/Cetirizine all formulations as above
		Mizolastine (POM)	

Recommendations

- All patients prescribed antihistamines should have their therapy reviewed and recommended for self-purchase where appropriate.
- New patients should not be prescribed antihistamines where an OTC or Pharmacy product is appropriate.
- Recommend self-care with OTC or pharmacy products to patients requiring antihistamines as per tables above.

References

- BNF (online(2017) ‘Antihistamines’, Available at: <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/formulary/bnf/current/3-respiratory-system/34-antihistamines-hyposensitisation-and-allergic-emergencies/341-antihistamines> (Accessed: 15/02/17)
- Martindale: The complete drug reference (2014) ‘Pruritus’ Available at: <https://www.medicinescomplete.com> (Accessed: 15/02/17)