

## POSITION STATEMENT

### Prescribing of antihistamines and nasal sprays for mild to moderate hay fever and allergic rhinitis on prescription

#### Recommendation:

In line with NHS England's guidance on conditions for which over-the-counter items should not be routinely prescribed, LSCMMG do **not** support the prescribing of antihistamines and nasal sprays for mild to moderate hay fever or allergic rhinitis – **RAG status – 'Do not prescribe'**

#### Background

- Hay fever and other allergic symptoms can be managed by avoiding triggers
- If treatment is needed for mild to moderate hay fever, a wide range of medications can be purchased from community pharmacies and supermarkets.
- These medications are usually less expensive than a prescription and can be purchased without seeing a GP.

#### Guidance and recommendations for clinicians

Advise patients about safe and effective self-care measures. However, patients should be advised to seek medical advice in the following circumstances:

- If experiencing wheezing, breathlessness or tightness in their chest.
- If pregnant or breastfeeding.
- The pattern of symptoms seems unusual or diagnosis is uncertain.
- An OTC corticosteroid nasal spray has been used for longer than 3 months.

#### References

1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. NICE Clinical Knowledge Summary: Allergic Rhinitis. Accessed via: <https://cks.nice.org.uk/allergic-rhinitis> (accessed online 16/4/24).
2. PrescQipp. Self Care webkit. Accessed via: <https://www.prescqipp.info/our-resources/webkits/self-care/> (accessed online 16/4/24).
3. NHS England. Policy guidance: conditions for which over the counter items should not be routinely prescribed in primary care. Accessed via: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/policy-guidance-conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed-in-primary-care/>