

Information about changes to medicines or treatments on the NHS: **Changes to homeopathic remedy prescribing**

The NHS will be asking doctors to stop or greatly reduce the prescribing of some treatments from December 2017. This is because the treatments are:

- Not as safe as other treatments OR
- Not as good (effective) as other treatments OR
- More expensive than other treatments that do the same thing.

This includes homeopathic remedies.

This document will explain why the changes are happening and where you can get more information and support.

What is homeopathy?

The basis of homeopathic "treatment" is that "like cures like". In other words a substance that causes certain symptoms can also help to stop those symptoms.

Many homeopathic remedies are substances that have been diluted many times in water until there is none, or almost none, of the original substance left.

Why will homeopathic remedies not be prescribed anymore?

There has been a lot of investigation into whether homeopathy works, but there is no good-quality evidence that homeopathy is effective as a treatment for any health condition.

In 2010 a report by the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, found that there was no evidence for the use of homeopathy. The committee said that any benefit to patients was due to the "placebo effect". A placebo effect means that there is no evidence that homeopathy works any better than taking a sugar tablet - it appears to work because people think it will.

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Approved for use in South East London by:

South East London Area Prescribing Committee. A partnership between NHS organisations in South East London: Bexley/ Bromley/ Greenwich/ Lambeth/ Lewisham & Southwark Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) & GSTFT/KCH/SLAM/Oxleas NHS Foundation Trusts & Lewisham & Greenwich NHS Trust

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) does not recommend homeopathy for the treatment of any health condition.

In the past some homeopathic remedies have been prescribed on the NHS. However, because the NHS needs to make sure that it only spends money on treatments that have evidence that they work, homeopathic remedies will no longer be prescribed on the NHS.

What can I do if I still want to take a homeopathic remedy?

Most homeopathic remedies can be bought over-the-counter from a pharmacy (chemist) or health food shop. Homeopathic remedies are generally safe and the risk of a serious side effect from these remedies is thought to be small.

It may be harmful to use homeopathy instead of standard medicines, or instead of vaccinations. If you are considering this, speak to your pharmacist or GP for advice.

Where can I find more information and support?

You can speak to your local pharmacist, GP or the person who prescribed the medication to you

- NHS Choices provides information about homeopathy
<https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/homeopathy/Pages/Introduction.aspx>
- The Patients Association can also offer support and advice:
<https://www.patients-association.org.uk/> or call 020 8423 8999

Find out more about the medicines that are being stopped or reduced:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed/>

If you have any questions about homeopathy prescribing please email them to: england.medicines@nhs.net

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