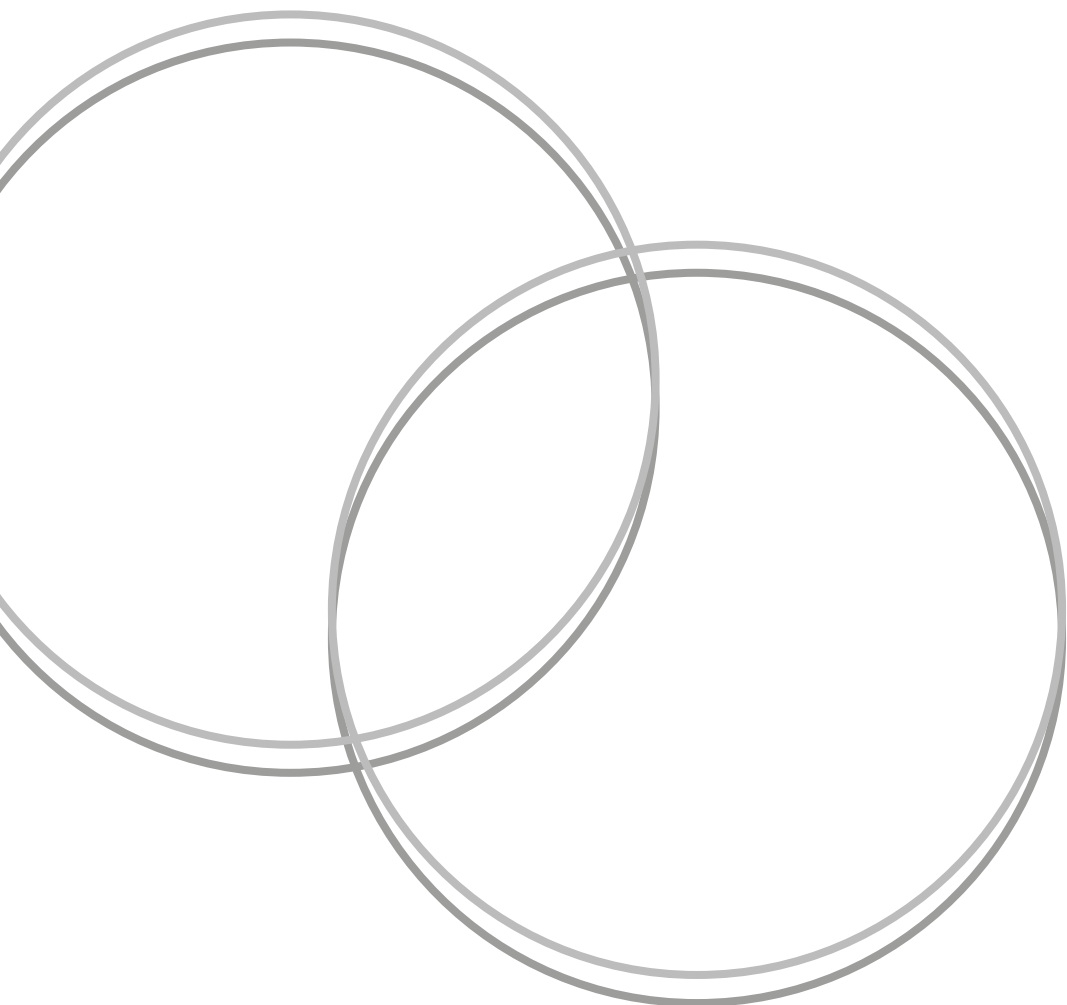




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Over the counter medicines

Information for patients



Medicines that can be purchased “over the counter” (OTC) in supermarkets and other retail outlets will no longer be routinely supplied by the hospital pharmacy for outpatients or when you are discharged from a ward. This includes patients attending the Emergency Department (ED).

This is in line with existing practice by GPs and other hospitals and will be introduced gradually starting with paracetamol and ibuprofen, followed by other medicines that are available for you to buy.

Why are over the counter medicines not being provided?

Most people will have “over the counter” (OTC) medicines such as paracetamol and ibuprofen at home already or can easily obtain these medicines.

Reducing the supply of OTC medication will improve waiting times for patients and enable staff to focus on provision of “Prescription only” medicines which require specific expertise to be supplied safely by Pharmacy.

Our prescribers and hospital pharmacists will have discretion to provide OTC medicines in exceptional circumstances, for example if the medicine is to be used differently to the instructions on the packaging or needs additional labelling for carers to administer.

OTC medicines cost the hospital more than they cost to buy in a shop. Saving that money means the hospital can provide treatments for more patients.

Doing your bit to help

Please don't ask for a prescription for medicines that can be bought affordably from a shop or that you may already have at home. Please consider playing your part in helping your local NHS to save money.

For more information about buying medicines over the counter please visit **Medicines information – NHS** (www.nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/medicines-information)

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Adapted from NHSE Prescribing of over the counter medicines Patient Information Leaflet

Author: Pharmacy Governance Team July 2025

July 2025

Review: July 2028

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

www.ouh.nhs.uk/information



Making a difference across our hospitals

charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

OXFORD HOSPITALS CHARITY (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1175809)

