



PRESCRIBING FLUORIDE BASED TOOTHPASTES

Guidance for Sheffield GPs

General Medical Practitioners have, for a number of years, been exasperated by the increasing number of requests from patients and General Dental Practitioners to prescribe fluoride based toothpastes. This is on a background of increasing workload demand, capacity issues and low morale in general practice. Many General Medical Practitioners feel that they are being asked to prescribe for convenience, items for which they have no training or familiarity and have insufficient knowledge of, eg with regard to quantity or cost.

From a practical point of view, prescribing toothpaste is difficult to implement under new GP prescribing initiatives such as e-prescribing, repeat dispensing and medication reviews. In most practices these tend to be ordered by the pharmacist in quantities of 28 or 56 days. This often does not fit comfortably with the length of a dental prescription.

It is also the common perception of General Medical Practitioners that General Dental Practitioners are able to issue dental prescriptions.

Notwithstanding the above, acknowledging the recent NICE guidance on oral health, most General Medical Practitioners would accept that patients with genuine health vulnerabilities who are entitled to free prescriptions, should be entitled to free fluoride toothpaste. This is highly likely to be accepted by general practice if adequate information on the formulation of the toothpaste, the cost and the length of course prescribed is made available, along with clarification of the genuine health vulnerability.

Further information with regard to the dental follow up appointment would be helpful.