

SOP 4: Care Home and Hospice Homely Remedy Guidance during COVID-19

Background

This guidance is designed to support commissioners, providers, hospice and care home staff on the acquisition and administration of homely remedies. This guidance is designed as a resource for medicines management teams, hospices, and care homes to adapt and use as appropriate in conjunction with your Homely Remedy Policy, Medicines Policy & local formulary.

This guidance is applicable in England and intended to provide concise information to support obtaining homely remedy medicines, to ensure the provision of safe and timely treatments for service users who might require them.

This guidance is not clinical in nature and does not remove the need to seek additional medical advice where there is doubt or concern about the condition being treated. For clinical support please refer to [NICE NG163](#): COVID-19 rapid guideline: managing symptoms (including at the end of life) in the community.

The RMO National Homely Remedies Template 2018 and National Care Forum guide can be found at:-
<https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/rmoc-guidance-homely-remedies/>

<https://www.nationalcareforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Homely-Remedies-guide.pdf>

Definitions

Care homes: In England, care homes can offer nursing and personal care or personal care only. Homes offering personal care only may not employ any registered nurses.

Homely remedy: a non-prescription only medicine that a care home can purchase over the counter (i.e. the medicines are owned by the care home) for the use of its service users.

P: Pharmacy medicine - an intermediate level of control, can be bought only from pharmacies and under a pharmacist's supervision.

GSL: General Sales List - may be bought from retail stores, such as a newsagent, a supermarket, or a vending machine in a shop.

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What is a homely remedy?

A homely remedy is a medicine that is normally available at home for the short-term management of a minor condition (e.g. paracetamol). These can be purchased from a community pharmacy or local shop. A prescription is not required for these medicines.

This guidance is intended to support the use of homely remedies in service users with COVID-19, as such the examples included in this policy are for the management of:

- Fever
- Cough
- Constipation (a common side-effect of some of the medications that may be used in service users with COVID-19 e.g. cough suppressants)

How do I start using a homely remedy list in my care home/hospice?

- Take advice from a healthcare professional, such as a GP, pharmacist or nurse, on the use of homely remedies for **each care home unit** or hospice. This should be done using a 'Homely Remedies Authorisation Sheet' (**Appendix 1**). The list needs to be authorised by a GP, pharmacist or nurse within the CCG.
- Use the list in conjunction with the policies and procedures in your local Medicines Management Policy and Homely Remedy Policy.
- Ensure that all relevant staff have adequate training and that there is an up-to-date signed list of trained staff. The example 'Homely Remedies Staff Signature Sheet' (**Appendix 2**) may be used.
- Ensure that there is suitable record keeping in place for the receipt, administration, and disposal of homely remedies. An example of how this information can be recorded is included in the guidance, 'Homely Remedies Record Sheet' (**Appendix 3**)
- Once the healthcare professionals happy that all these criteria have been met, the form(s) should be completed with details of the home and healthcare professional, signed, dated, and retained in the care home/hospice for future reference.
- Ensure the homely remedy list(s) is accessible for the trained staff administering medicines. It is useful to have important information about the homely remedy, which can be kept with the Homely Remedy Record Sheet, so that this information can be easily accessed. There are examples given in this policy (**Appendix 4**) for three common conditions. The patient information leaflet or product packaging is also useful to refer to.
- The care home/hospice will need to purchase the medication required. This should be small over the counter packs which can be purchased from a community pharmacy or local shop.

Appendix 1

Example Homely Remedies Authorisation Sheet

For **short term use**, for the management of minor conditions.

- Homely Remedies should only be administered in accordance with the manufacturer's directions and only to those service users whose GP, pharmacist, or nurse has agreed to their use. If paracetamol is to be administered, consideration must first be given to the service user's other medicines and their weight.
- The signed 'Homely Remedies Authorisation Sheet' should be kept in the **individual** service user's medication profile. These medicines must not be administered indefinitely, and maximum treatment duration should be agreed for each medication (generally 48 hours). If the service user presents with deteriorating COVID-19 symptoms, immediate medical advice must be sought.
- The administration of homely remedies must be recorded. This should ideally be done in both the MAR chart and the service user's care plan, as per care home medicine policy.
- It is important to maintain an audit trail for each homely remedy by additionally completing the relevant sections of 'Homely Remedy Record Sheet' for the medicine being administered.
- Homely remedies should be reviewed at least annually, and ideally at the service user's medication review or care plan review, unless a change in circumstances indicates the need for a review sooner.
- Homely remedies should be stored securely and kept separate to the service users' prescribed medication.

I authorise the use of the following homely remedies (delete/add as appropriate) to the named service user:.....DOB:.....

NHS number:.....

Care home / Hospice.....

Example chart:

Minor condition requiring treatment	Drug/ Medicine	Maximum dose to be taken at one time	Directions (including maximum daily dose)	Maximum duration of treatment before seeking advice
Pain relief for mild to moderate pain &/or fever	Paracetamol 500mg tablets/soluble tablets OR Paracetamol sugar free suspension 250mg/5ml	Over 50kg: Two 500mg tablets (or 20ml of 250mg/5ml suspension) Under 50kg: One 500mg tablet (or 10ml of 250mg/5ml suspension)	Four to six hours between doses, up to max FOUR times a day Maximum dose in 24 hours: Over 50kg: 4g (eight 500mg tablets or 80ml of 250mg/5ml suspension) Under 50kg: 2g (four 500mg tablets or 40ml of 250mg/5ml suspension)	48 hours
Constipation	Senna 7.5mg tablets or 7.5mg/5ml syrup	One to two tablets or one to two 5ml spoonfuls of syrup	Once a day as required for constipation—usually at bedtime	48 hours
Cough	Simple Linctus sugar free	5-10mls	Up to Four times daily	48 hours

Name and designation of health care professional authorising the use of homely remedies:Date:

Appendix 4

Supporting Information for Homely Remedies

Managing Fever:

PARACETAMOL MEDICINE INFORMATION

Name/forms of Medicine <i>(document which form is administered to the service user)</i>	Paracetamol 500mg tablets Paracetamol 500mg soluble tablets Paracetamol 250mg/5ml sugar free suspension
Indication <i>(when it can be used)</i>	For the management of fever in COVID-19
Route	Oral
Dose	Over 50kg Two 500mg tablets (or 20ml of 250mg/5ml suspension) Under 50kg One 500mg tablet (or 10ml of 250/5ml suspension)
Frequency	Every four to six hours, up to maximum FOUR doses in 24 hours
Maximum dose in <u>24 hours</u>	Maximum dose in <u>24 hours</u> : Over 50kg: 4g (eight 500mg tablets or 80ml of 250mg/5ml suspension) Under 50kg: 2g (four 500mg tablets or 40ml of 250mg/5ml suspension)
Maximum duration of treatment as a homely remedy	Up to 48 hours or if no response, then seek advice
Do NOT give in these circumstances	If the service user is already receiving prescribed paracetamol or other medications containing paracetamol (e.g. co-codamol, co-dydramol, Solpadol, Zapain, Remedeine etc) Paracetamol intolerance Alcohol dependence Liver impairment/disease or any investigation of the liver Severe kidney impairment Hypersensitivity to any components of the preparation
Warnings/Adverse reactions (see product information for full details)	Rashes, blood disorders, liver damage following overdose

Managing Constipation:

**SENNA TABLETS
MEDICINE INFORMATION**

Name/forms of Medicine <i>(document which form is administered to the service user)</i>	Senna 7.5mg tablets Senna 7.5mg/5ml oral solution sugar free (Senokot Syrup)
Indication <i>(when it can be used)</i>	Constipation
Route	Oral
Dose	One or two tablets (5 to 10ml of 7.5mg/5ml solution)
Frequency	Once daily at night
Maximum dose in <u>24 hours</u>	Two tablets (or 10ml of 7.5mg/5ml solution)
Maximum duration of treatment as a homely remedy	Up to 48 hours or if no response, then seek advice
Do NOT give in these circumstances	Constipation accompanied by other symptoms, i.e. abdominal pain/vomiting, bleeding from the back passage If constipation is associated with vomiting, loss of appetite, inability to pass wind or abdominal swelling, as these symptoms could indicate a more serious blockage (intestinal obstruction) Service users who have had previous abdominal operations
Warnings/Adverse reactions (see product information for full details)	Diarrhoea, gastrointestinal discomfort, abdominal cramps, urine discolouration (yellow or red-brown colour)

Manging Cough:

HONEY (Not a homely remedy but recommended as a self-care item for soothing a dry cough by [NICE NG163](#))

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Name/forms of Medicine <i>(document which form is administered to the service user)</i>	Honey
Indication <i>(when it can be used)</i>	Initial management of cough in COVID-19
Route	Oral
Dose	5ml, more soothing if mixed withwith warm water
Frequency	When required
Maximum dose in <u>24 hours</u>	N/A
Maximum duration of treatment as a homely remedy	Up to 48 hours or if no response, then seek advice
Do NOT give in these circumstances	Diabetic service users (high sugar content). If diabetic - consider a sugar free alternative (e.g. simple linctus sugar free)
Warnings/Adverse reactions (see product information for full details)	High sugar content

SIMPLE LINCTUS SUGAR FREE

MEDICINE INFORMATION

Name/forms of Medicine <i>(document which form is administered to the service user)</i>	Simple linctus sugar free (S/F)
Indication <i>(when it can be used)</i>	Initial management of cough in COVID-19
Route	Oral
Dose	5ml to 10ml
Frequency	Up to four times a day
Maximum dose in <u>24 hours</u>	40ml
Maximum duration of treatment as a homely remedy	Up to 48 hours or if no response, then seek advice
Do NOT give in these circumstances	Previous intolerance of simple linctus S/F
Warnings/Adverse reactions (see product information for full details)	

CODEINE LINCTUS

MEDICINE INFORMATION

Name/forms of Medicine <i>(document which form is administered to the service user)</i>	Codeine linctus 15mg/5ml Codeine linctus 15mg/5ml sugar free (S/F)
Indication <i>(when it can be used)</i>	For distressing cough in COVID-19
Route	Oral
Dose	5ml to 10ml
Frequency	Every four hours as required, up to a maximum of FOUR doses in 24 hours
Maximum dose in <u>24 hours</u>	40ml
Maximum duration of treatment as a homely remedy	Up to 48 hours or if no response, then seek advice
Do NOT give in these circumstances	<p>If the service user is already receiving prescribed codeine, including other medications that include codeine (co-codamol, Solpadol, Zapain etc) or if the service user is receiving other opioid medications including dihydrocodeine, tramadol, buprenorphine, methadone, tapentadol, morphine, fentanyl, oxycodone, pethidine, hydromorphone, dipipanone, alfentanil, diamorphine, meptazinol</p> <p>Codeine intolerance</p> <p>Liver impairment/disease or any investigation of the liver</p> <p>Severe kidney impairment</p> <p>Chronic bronchitis, COPD or bronchiectasis</p> <p>Asthma</p> <p>Current or previous addiction to opioids</p> <p>Head injury</p> <p>Shallow breath or breathing difficulty</p> <p>Previous bowel obstruction</p> <p>Hypersensitivity to any components of the preparation</p>
Warnings/Adverse reactions (see product information for full details)	<p>Constipation, nausea, dizziness, drowsiness, addiction potential</p> <p>S/F formulation is preferred option in diabetics</p>

Appendix 5

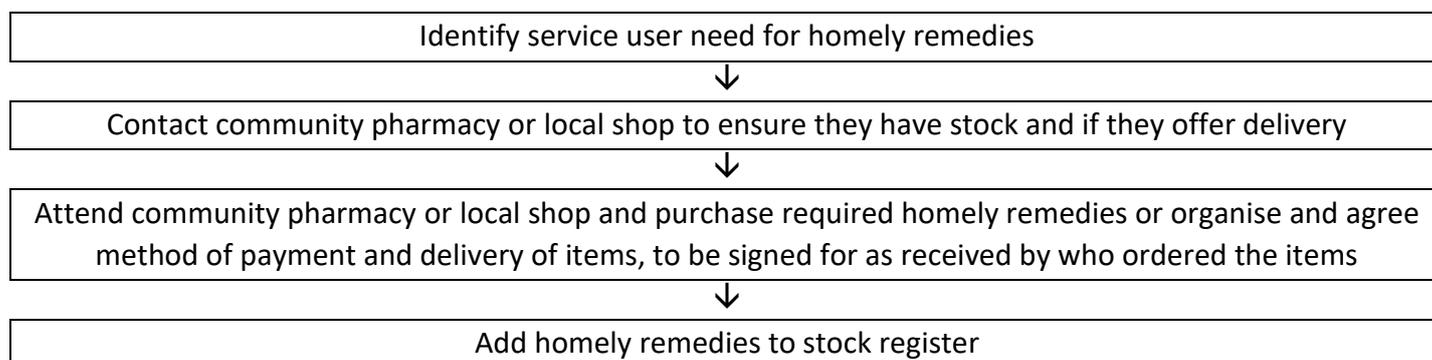
Standard Operating Procedures for Obtaining Medicines

Obtaining Homely Remedies for Care Homes/Hospices

All care homes/hospices can support people to access [over the counter medicines and homely remedies](#) for treating minor ailments. During the COVID-19 outbreak it is recommended that care homes/hospices purchase paracetamol, a cough linctus (e.g. simple linctus or codeine linctus) and senna.

See 'Care Home and Hospice Homely Remedy Guidance during COVID-19' for information on safe administration.

Obtaining Homely Remedies for Care Homes / Hospices



References

RMOC Homely Remedies Policy Template (November 2018)

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