

MEDIA RELEASE

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PAGB response to Which? OTC medicines labelling and packaging concerns

John Smith, PAGB Chief Executive, comments: “The labelling of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines is highly regulated in the UK. As an industry, we take very seriously the information provided to consumers on medicines’ packaging and we ensure we comply with the relevant legislation and make sure people have the right information to choose a product to meet their needs. This mandates that active ingredients and vital product information are displayed on the front of product packaging and explained clearly in patient information leaflets, to ensure people know how to use their medicines safely.

“Some OTC products are marketed to target specific symptoms, this is because having these displayed on the front of the pack helps people to choose a suitable product more easily based on their symptoms, particularly in a shop where there isn’t a pharmacist to ask. OTC medicines may also come in a variety of different preparation methods, giving customers breadth of choice in terms of their preferred format, for example easy to swallow capsules for those who may struggle with standard tablets.

“All labelling must be in line with the registered prescribing information and must not be overly promotional in nature. Speed or duration of action statements can be useful to ensure safe use of a medicine and can aid compliance with dosage instructions. Such information can help people know if the product is working for them and enable them to make a decision about seeking professional advice for a diagnosis or using a different, more appropriate product. Double or triple action statements can only be used where a product has ingredients that work in two or three different ways.

“As with all medicines, it’s important that people always read the label and are careful not to take more than one product containing the same active ingredient. People who don’t feel confident in choosing an appropriate medicine for themselves should consult a pharmacist. Pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals and can provide expert advice and recommendations based on the individual’s symptoms”.

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Notes to editors:

PAGB (Proprietary Association of Great Britain) is the UK trade association representing manufacturers of branded over-the-counter medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements.

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