



MEDIA RELEASE

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PAGB response to the new NICE guidance on antimicrobial prescribing for acute cough

In response to the new guidance launched by NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) and developed with Public Health England, John Smith, Chief Executive of PAGB said, "PAGB welcomes the NICE guidance* on antimicrobial prescribing for acute cough, which recommends honey or over-the-counter (OTC) cough medicines containing pelargonium, guaifenesin or dextromethorphan, as the most appropriate course of treatment, in the first instance.

"A cough will usually last between three to four weeks and in the majority of cases is caused by a viral upper respiratory tract infection, such as a cold or flu, which will not respond to antibiotics. It is encouraging that NICE guidance recommends that unless they have a pre-existing lung condition, or are in a higher risk group, adults and children over 12 years with an acute cough should be advised to self care and use OTC cough products, rather than seeking a GP's prescription. OTC medicines play an important role in helping people manage symptoms of self-treatable conditions.

"It's important to remember that cough medicines will not 'cure' a cough. If used in accordance with the instructions on the packaging and in the patient information leaflet, then cough medicines are an appropriately safe way to help relieve the disruptive symptoms of a cough so people can get on with their day.

"The key to effective management of a cough is to identify the most troublesome symptom and to choose an appropriate product to treat it. The pharmacy should be the first port of call for people who are looking for advice on how to manage their cough symptoms. Pharmacists are expert healthcare professionals who can give advice on the most suitable medicine to take if people are unsure, or signpost people if they need further guidance.

"PAGB believes it is important to empower people to self care for self-treatable conditions, like coughs, to help to reduce unnecessary pressure on overstretched NHS services, ensuring people are seen by the right healthcare professional at the right time. PAGB is calling for a national strategy for self care, to help ensure a sustainable future for our healthcare system, by enhancing access to self care, improving health literacy and realising the potential of pharmacists."

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* <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng120>

Notes to editors:

PAGB defines Self Care as the actions people take for themselves and their families to promote and maintain good health and wellbeing and to take care of their self-treatable conditions.

PAGB, the consumer healthcare association, represents the manufacturers of branded OTC medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements in the UK.

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