



The Consumer Healthcare Association

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PAGB WELCOMES POST MENOPAUSE THERAPY NOW AVAILABLE AT PHARMACIES

In a UK first, pharmacists can now supply a locally applied hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to treat and relieve the symptoms of vaginal atrophy without a prescription.

Michelle Riddalls, CEO of PAGB, the consumer healthcare association www.pagb.co.uk said: “We are delighted that postmenopausal women experiencing symptoms of vaginal atrophy can now walk into their local pharmacy to access Gina, a vaginal tablet containing the hormone oestradiol, to treat and relieve their symptoms without the need for a GP appointment and prescription.

“Around half of postmenopausal women experience vaginal atrophy and this is associated with dryness, soreness, itching, burning, and painful intercourse¹. These challenging symptoms can undermine women’s emotional well-being and self-esteem, as well as their relationships.

“The availability of Gina over-the-counter² will mean that women can receive expert healthcare from their local pharmacist. Pharmacists are highly qualified healthcare professionals who will be able to determine whether Gina is suitable for a particular individual and pinpoint any issues that might warrant further consultation with a GP or specialist.

“This is also a huge step forward helping women to take control over their health by enabling and supporting self care. The pandemic forced us all to rethink the way that healthcare is delivered and brought to light the central role that self care can play in managing health issues. Our research has shown that this is what consumers want³. It has also brought huge benefits to patients, healthcare providers and to taxpayers via more efficient and effective use of NHS resources.”

Deborah Evans, PAGB advisor and community pharmacist, said: “From today, under the supervision of a pharmacist, Gina – a vaginal oestrogen therapy is now available over-the-counter to treat and relieve symptoms of vaginal atrophy. This will be welcome news for the millions of women who suffer from this hugely debilitating post-menopause symptom. Community pharmacists are well placed to support women in deciding if Gina is the right choice. Not only do pharmacists train to qualify for five years, but they will also receive specific training to enable them to identify if it is the right choice and if necessary, signpost to a GP.

“Community pharmacists are also the key healthcare professional on the high street. They play a key role in providing expert advice and are a convenient and easily accessible first stop for health advice without the need for an appointment.”

- ENDS -

Notes to editors:

PAGB, the consumer healthcare association, represents the manufacturers of branded OTC medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements in the UK. PAGB in collaboration with pharmacy and healthcare organisations is calling on the Government to develop a national self care strategy: selfcarestrategy.org.

Recent research for PAGB shows³

- 65% of people believe the NHS should make it easier for people to care for themselves, without using GP services or A&E
- 65% say the pandemic should change the way we think about using GP appointments and A&E services.
- 41% say the pandemic had changed their attitude to accessing healthcare services.
- 27% have changed their attitude to self care
- 72% of people believe GP appointments should not be used for self-treatable conditions
- 85% believe we need self care education
- The number of people using the internet to check general health symptoms increased by 51% in the first year of the pandemic — from 39% to 59%.

Michelle Riddalls, Chief Executive at PAGB, and regulatory and reclassification expert is available for interview.

Michelle was previously PAGB's Senior Director of Regulatory Affairs and Advertising Services. In this role she led the regulatory affairs and advertising services functions of the association, including copy clearance. Michelle is an expert in consumer healthcare regulation and has received awards from TOPRA for her work in prescription only medicine (POM) to over-the-counter reclassifications.

Michelle has worked in consumer healthcare for almost two decades. In her time at Pfizer Consumer Healthcare she was integral in the highly successful POM to GSL reclassification of Nexium Control and, more recently, the Viagra Connect POM to pharmacy (P) switch.

Deborah Evans, PAGB advisor, community pharmacist and Royal Pharmaceutical Society Fellow is available for interview.

Deborah has worked for over 35 years in pharmacy and is the Managing Director of Pharmacy Complete, working across all pharmacy sectors to provide support, strategic advice, market insight and solutions to pharmacy organisations, the NHS, Public Health and pharmaceutical companies. Deborah owns and runs a private pharmacy in Winchester which offers a menopause clinic. Deborah is considered a national pharmacy leader and is a Fellow of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. She led the national, award-winning Healthy Living Pharmacy (HLP) pathfinder work programme, initially project managing Portsmouth HLP pilot. She still advises and informs development of the concept nationally and internationally.

¹ www.vaginalatrophy.co.uk

² Gina will be available over-the-counter under the supervision of pharmacist. Consumer cannot buy it directly from the shelves.

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