

Painkillers factsheet – Paracetamol and Ibuprofen

Every year, the NHS in North Norfolk and rural Broadland spends approximately £400,000 on prescribing paracetamol and ibuprofen as tablets, caplets, gel and suspension products

This sum equates to:

	80	MORE hip replacements or
	15,385	MORE hormone treatments for breast cancer or
	18,000	MORE Alzheimer's drug treatments (average cost) or
	490	MORE cataract operations or
	13	MORE chemotherapy treatments

When required in small quantities or for short periods, it is better for the NHS if people buy paracetamol and ibuprofen without a prescription.

For this reason, North Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group – your local NHS organisation responsible for planning and buying health care – has agreed that GPs will stop prescribing paracetamol and ibuprofen in smaller quantities for short-term use.

You can help with this by buying these painkillers from a shop, pharmacy or petrol station. All paracetamol and ibuprofen products are available as less expensive generic or in-store brands. When provided on prescription, they cost the NHS significantly more.

If you are a patient who needs these drugs in regular large quantities, don't worry – you will continue to get them on repeat prescription.



It's your NHS - please use it wisely!

The prescription journey

Small one-off prescriptions of paracetamol and ibuprofen are often prescribed for common ailments such as cold and flu symptoms, a high temperature or minor aches and pains.

However, there's much more to a prescription than the costs of the drugs. The whole prescription journey generates costs for the NHS.

Issuing a prescription also involves:



GP time;



dispensers managing repeat prescriptions;



a dispensing fee charged to the NHS;



processing at the prescriptions service in Newcastle

There are limits to the number of painkillers sold by some outlets, including supermarkets, but pharmacies can sell them in larger quantities. It is good to keep your medicines cabinet stocked up so remember to think about painkillers when you are writing your shopping list.

- ▶ **By keeping a selection of essential medications and storing them safely at home you can treat common conditions and minor ailments in a timely manner.**
- ▶ **This can mean that you save both time and money and start to feel better quicker.**
- ▶ **It can also avoid an unnecessary trip to the doctor, and even visits to the A&E department.**



It's your NHS - please use it wisely!