Position statement on the prescribing of sunscreens on GP FP10 prescription

Wandsworth CCG does not support the routine prescribing of sunscreen preparations for routine use for the protection against the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation.

The prescribing of sunscreens is restricted on a FP10 prescription unless they are approved by the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS) for the following indications:

- Genetic disorders, photodermatoses¹, vitiligo from radiotherapy and chronic or recurrent herpes simplex labialis¹.

*Photosensitive dermatoses include the following conditions². This is not an exhaustive list and consideration will be given to requests for other photodermatoses on the recommendation of NHS dermatology specialists:

- Polymorphic light eruption (PLE)
- Actinic prurigo
- Chronic actinic dermatitis
- Solar urticaria
- Hydroa vacciniforme
- Xeroderma pigmentosum
- Porphyria
- Drug-induced photosensitivity
- Photocontact allergic reactions
- Dermatomyositis
- Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE)

The following products are allowed on prescription³ (endorse all prescriptions with ‘ACBS’):

- La Roche-Posay Anthelios XL SPF 50+ Cream
- Sunsense Ultra (Ego) SPF 50+
- Uvistat Lipscreen SPF 50
- Uvistat Suncrea SPF 30
- Uvistat Suncream SPF 50

Advisory sunscreen because of the risk of skin cancer does not meet the ACBS criteria but can be considered for certain high-risk patients on the advice of an NHS dermatology specialist only.

References:

1. PrescQIPP – Use of sunscreens for approved indications
Guidance for clinicians

Recommendations:

- Ensure the dermatological condition is clearly documented in the patients notes
- The prescribing of sunscreen preparations for non-clinical indications is not recommended and should be reviewed.
- Where the patient meets the prescribing criteria, a suitable preparation can be prescribed. Prescriptions should be issued as an ‘acute’ prescription and not added to repeat.
- Existing patients should be reviewed to ensure they meet the criteria.
- If the ACBS prescribing criteria are not met, then review and stop prescribing the sunscreen.
- Sunscreens are readily available to buy from most community pharmacies and retail outlets.
- For routine sun protection advise patients to self-purchase sunscreen preparations with dual protection against UVB and UVA rays with an SPF value minimum of 30. SPF less than 30 should not normally be prescribed.
- For optimum photoprotection:
  - Use sunscreens from spring to autumn in people with photodermatoses.
  - Apply sunscreens thickly and frequently (approximately two hourly).

Guidance for patients, carers and guardians

- Sunscreens are readily available to buy from most community pharmacies and retail outlets.
- Community pharmacists can offer advice on sun protection, and when to seek medical advice.
- Skin should be protected with clothing (hat, T-shirt, sunglasses) and exposure to sun between 11am to 3pm minimised by staying in the shade. Babies and young children should be kept out of direct sunlight.
- UVB is mainly responsible for sunburn and has strong links to malignant melanoma and basal cell carcinoma. SPF indicates the level of protection a product gives to UVB and UVA.
- UVA is associated with skin ageing and can also cause skin cancer. Check preparations for a UVA seal – a logo with ‘UVA’ inside a circle. This indicates that a product meets the EU recommendation for sun creams to offer a UVA protection factor equivalent to at least a third of their SPF.
- Approximately 30mL sunscreen is required to cover the average body of an adult.
- Sunscreen should be applied 15 – 30 minutes before sun exposure. Reapply every two hours and immediately after swimming, perspiring and towel drying or if it has rubbed off.
- Further patient information can be found here:\ http://www.bad.org.uk/for-the-public/skin-cancer/sunscreen-fact-sheet

The NHS belongs to YOU, use it responsibly