

Process for medicines management of an outbreak of scabies in a care home or residential setting

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General information

Following outbreaks of scabies in care homes, the following guidance has been written by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board Medicines Optimisation Team.

This guidance is written to help General Practice, care homes and community pharmacies with the bulk prescribing of permethrin 5% cream for the treatment of the outbreak. Alternative treatments for scabies are not covered by this guidance, but can be found in the UKHSA advice linked below.

In the event of an outbreak please ensure your organisation's infection prevention and control (IPC) practices are robust and all staff are following the correct IPC procedures. You can find more information on the management of scabies cases and outbreaks on the [UKHSA website: guidance on the management of scabies cases and outbreaks in long-term care facilities and other closed settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/scabies-in-care-homes) and [Scabies \(infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk\) website](https://infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/).

Actions Required for Doctors if notified of a scabies outbreak in a care home or residential setting

For details see [Information for GP practices](#)

1. Identify residents under your care.
2. Check for allergy / sensitivity to Permethrin / Chrysanthemums / Compositae.
3. Write bulk prescription for Permethrin Cream 5% for appropriate residents.
4. Write individual prescriptions for alternative treatment for those inappropriate for Permethrin Cream 5%.

For Care Homes

GP's and community pharmacies can bulk prescribe and dispense Permethrin 5% cream in the event of a scabies outbreak. For more information visit the NHSBSA website: [What is a bulk prescription and are there any restrictions on what can be prescribed? · Customer Self-Service \(nhsbsa.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/customer-self-service)

The bulk prescribed permethrin 5% cream will not have individual resident names on the tubes, only the care home name. The care home should write the resident's name on the label and outer box to ensure each tube is used for only one resident. This will require agreement with the community pharmacy as to whether MAR charts or additional labels for current MAR charts are going to be supplied to the care home.

If MAR charts or additional labels are not supplied for adding to the current MAR chart, a suitably trained staff member should transcribe the instructions provided by the GP surgery for the cream onto each resident's MAR chart. Ensure any MAR charts produced in the care home are checked for accuracy by a second trained staff member and both staff must sign the MAR chart.

Staff and other contacts must obtain a prescription from their own GP surgery if they are not registered with the same surgery as the care home. The care home can purchase permethrin for staff use from a local community pharmacy, if appropriate. Check for allergies and sensitivities with the [Permethrin 5% w/w Cream - Summary of Product Characteristics](#) (SPC), including chrysanthemums or Compositae (a type of flowering plant).

Staff or residents who may be pregnant or breast feeding should consult a healthcare professional before commencing treatment.

Treatment should be coordinated so that **everyone is treated on the same day**. This includes anyone (staff, visitors and residents) who have had close physical contact with the case without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) within 8 weeks prior to diagnosis. If staff contacts are off duty at the time of treatment, they should complete the first 24-hour treatment before returning to work.

Contacts and residents should all receive **two treatments one week apart**.

For further information on scabies, please visit the [NHS website - Scabies](#).

Information for GP practices

Liaise with the Community Pharmacy providing the medicines to the care home to arrange an order of the required amount of Permethrin 5% Cream.

Liaise with any other GP practices who have residents living in the care home to co-ordinate treatment. GPs may bulk prescribe for residents under certain circumstances (see below), but each GP needs to prescribe for the residents under their care.

Quantity required depends on the number of residents to be treated, all residents needing treatment should be treated on **two occasions one week apart** (even if asymptomatic) as per UKHSA guidance (12th January 2023 [UKHSA website: guidance on the management of scabies cases and outbreaks in long-term care facilities and other closed settings](#)).

Adults, the elderly, and children over 12 years will normally require up to one tube (30g) per treatment, i.e. two tubes to complete the course.

A few adults may need to use an additional tube for full body coverage but should not use more than two tubes (60g in total) at each application, i.e. a maximum of four tubes to complete the course.

Follow the [Guidance on Bulk Prescribing for care home residents](#) produced by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board.

A bulk prescription is an order for **two or more** patients, bearing the name of a school or institution, e.g. a care home, in which at least twenty persons normally reside, for the treatment of at least ten of whom a particular doctor is responsible, for medicines which are not prescription-only.

Patients not registered under a particular GP who is bulk prescribing for a care home, should continue to receive named patient supplies from their own GP (unless their GP is also bulk prescribing for that care home).

As the treatment for scabies is an acute issue and not an ongoing treatment, permethrin 5% cream does not need to be prescribed on an individual basis for each resident initially. Bulk prescriptions can be used in a scabies outbreak as permethrin 5% cream is a Pharmacy Only ("P") medicine.

A bulk prescription can be written or printed on a paper FP10 prescription; **it cannot be sent via EPS as there is no patient name. This can only be signed by a General Prescriber, not a Non-Medical Prescriber currently.**

[Requirements for Bulk Prescriptions](#)

1. Use the wording "for patients under my care at {the name of the care home}" (instead of the individual name of the patient).
2. Date prescribed.
3. The words 'bulk prescription' – to identify the type of prescription.
4. The medicine that is being 'bulk prescribed'.
5. The total quantity required for all service users on this medication.

6. The directions i.e. for permethrin 5% cream: apply all over the whole body, including the neck, face, ears, and scalp. Wash off after 8-12 hours. Repeat after 7 days. Two treatment courses are required.

The prescription should be for enough to treat all residents, taking into account those who will need to use 2 tubes. An entry must be made into each resident's medical record, either by bulk entry, or individually.

Check for allergies and sensitivities with the Summary Product Characteristics (SPC) [Permethrin 5% w/w Cream](#) including chrysanthemums or Compositae (a type of flowering plant).

Provide the care home with a list of residents who are being treated under the bulk prescription.

Provide a separate list of any residents who cannot be treated with permethrin cream 5% due to allergy / intolerance / sensitivity. Alternative treatment should be arranged for these residents on an individual basis so that treatment can be co-ordinated for all residents, staff, and other contacts.

Ensure that the care home is provided with additional written instructions for use of permethrin 5% cream:

- The cream should be applied all over the whole body, including the neck, face, ears, and scalp.
- Particular attention should be paid to the areas between fingers and toes, under nails, wrists, armpits, external genitalia, breasts, and buttocks. The area close to the eyes should be avoided.
- Treatment should be washed off after 8–12 hours. If hands are washed with soap within 8 hours of application, they should be treated again with cream.
- The cream should be applied to cool dry skin (not after a hot bath) and allowed to dry before the person dresses in clean clothes.
- The cream should not be applied to broken skin, mucous membranes, or near the eyes.
- If the cream comes into contact with dressings, clothing, and bedding, the fabric can be easily ignited with a naked flame.
- Carers who apply permethrin 5% cream should wear gloves to avoid any possible irritation to the hands.

[For Community Pharmacy](#)

The GP practice will contact you to order the required quantity of Permethrin 5% cream.

The GP practice will provide you with a bulk prescription for Permethrin 5% cream for the residents under the care of each GP.

See the PSNC website: [Is this prescription form valid?](#)

The tubes will need to be labelled with the name of the care home rather than each individual resident.

Agree with the care home whether MAR charts or additional labels for current MAR charts are going to be supplied to the care home.

References:

1. GOV.UK UKHSA *guidance on the management of scabies cases and outbreaks in long-term care facilities and other closed settings* Update 12 Jan 2023 Available at: [UKHSA guidance on the management of scabies cases and outbreaks in long-term care facilities and other closed settings](#) (Accessed 25 May 2023)
2. Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust *Community Infection Prevention and Control Policy for Care Home Settings – Scabies* V3.00 April 2023 Available at: [Scabies - \(infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk\)](#) (Accessed 25 May 2023)
3. NHSBSA Knowledge Base *What is a bulk prescription and are there any restrictions on what can be prescribed?* 2023 Available at [What is a bulk prescription and are there any restrictions on what can be prescribed?](#) (Accessed 25 May 2023)
4. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board, Medicines Optimisation Team *Guidance on Bulk Prescribing* Jan 2018 Available at: [C&P ICS](#) (Accessed 25 May 2023)
5. Sandoz Limited *Permethrin 5% Cream Summary of Product Characteristics* 25 Oct 2021 Available at [Permethrin 5% w/w Cream - Summary of Product Characteristics \(SmPC\)](#) (Accessed 25 May 2023)

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