NHS
East and North Hertfordshire
Clinical Commissioning Group

Priorities Forum Statement

Number	**52**
Subject	**Virulite Cold Sore Machine**
Date of decision	**September 2012**
Date refreshed	**May 2017**
Date of review	**May 2018**

GUIDANCE

The Virulite Cold Sore Machine works by emitting light of a wavelength that its developers claim heals cold sores twice as quickly as using an antiviral cream.

Following a number of refinements to the device and two clinical trials, Virulite CS has now been accepted as an addition to part IX of the Drug Tariff for England and Wales, (and part 3 of the Scottish Drug Tariff), prescribable on the NHS from 1 January 2008.

Virulite costs £18.50 per machine and they carry a three-year warranty.

The evidence for the effectiveness of these machines either against placebo or topical aciclovir is very limited and no long-term safety data could be found on a search. The evidence relates to crusting or healing rates and not to prevention of recurrence or to use in combination with other treatments.

NHS Clinical Knowledge Summaries states that the benefits of topical antivirals (aciclovir or penciclovir) are small and require treatment to be initiated at the onset of symptoms (erythema or prodromal stage) before vesicles appear. They do not recommend that oral antivirals should be used in immunocompetent individuals for mild-to-moderate episodes given the self-limiting nature of the disease, the limited benefits of oral antivirals, and that treatment needs to be initiated at the onset of prodromal symptoms. They may be of most use in severe cases or in immunocompromised individuals at risk of developing further complications.

In terms of any one specific patient, prescribing the Virulite might be an option if an immunocompetent patient is unable to concord with the usual self-help advice and the administration schedules for more established therapies or is frequently presenting for repeat prescriptions. However, that this product should NOT be prescribed routinely for herpes labialis until such time more robust evidence of benefit is available.

The Human Rights Act has been considered in the formation of this policy statement.