

## **1. New over-the-counter migraine treatment**

The highly effective migraine treatment Imigran has been available on prescription for 15 years but now, in a real breakthrough for sufferers, has just become available over the counter.

Because migraines come on suddenly and without warning, sufferers need treatment instantly. Yet it can take two or three days to get an appointment to see your GP, by which time the migraine will most probably have gone.

And in the meantime, the pain will be excruciating.

But as Imigran is a very strong drug, and the only medication which works to treat the root cause of the migraine rather than just reducing the pain, there were problems about having it openly on sale. Imigran Recovery – the name given to the OTC version – has finally been granted a P status which means it can be sold in pharmacies, but not just be picked off the shelf. Instead, the pharmacist must first ascertain that this drug is suitable for you.

For this to be assessed, you first have to complete a detailed questionnaire. At the end of the consultation, you will either be supplied with the product, referred to your GP or advised on an alternative type of treatment. Each consultation, taking about eight minutes, is tailored to the individual needs of the patient, and in most cases, although at the discretion of the pharmacist, only the patient will be allowed to buy the product.

Once the questionnaire has been completed, the patient is issued with a Treatment Card which must be shown to the pharmacist every time Imigran is requested.

A pack of two pills are issued at a time, one to be taken immediately and the other, after two hours if symptoms start to return. The first pill usually zaps the migraine completely within 30 minutes.

Each pack costs £7.99 and comes in a little carry case which can fit into a pocket, handbag or briefcase, enabling sufferers to treat themselves at the first, all too familiar signs of this debilitating and so far, incurable, condition.

Although Imigran treats migraine attacks successfully, it cannot prevent them in advance. The drug only starts to work once an attack begins.

## **2. Verruca treatment**

Most people associate verrucas with schoolchildren and school locker rooms, but these nasty viruses can strike at any age, and are becoming commoner in older age groups as gym use increases. When contracted, they are notoriously difficult to treat, as well as being highly infectious.

Bazuka is a home treatment for verrucas and warts which works to destroy the virus while at the same time forming a protective barrier over the area to prevent further infection.

The remedy contains salicylic acid – also the main ingredient in aspirin – and unlike some remedies, is completely painless to use. It comes in gel form.

Bazuka is available in two strengths, priced at £5.45 and £6.35. The product comes as a complete treatment kit including an emery board and full instruction leaflet.

## **3. Healthy joints**

One of the major health problems associated with getting older is stiff, painful joints. Now a new free booklet has been produced, written by experts in their field, which provides nutritional and exercise advice on keeping joints healthy and supple.

Dr Rob Hicks, GP and broadcaster, gives an overview on the best ways to keep joints young, and exercise consultant Beverly Skull has designed a range of Pilates-based exercises to improve joint mobility.

The booklet, Jump 4 Joints, has been produced by natural health company Health Perception and is available by phoning 0845 330 5518 or visiting [www.jump4joints.co.uk](http://www.jump4joints.co.uk)

#### **4. Bowel screening programme**

A national NHS bowel screening programme is now under way, aimed at men and women aged between 60 and 69. The test, known as a faecal occult blood test, is performed at home and the sample then sent to the lab for analysis.

As age is a definite risk factor for this extremely common form of cancer, patients will be screened every two years. It is a voluntary programme but as it is painless, free and easy to use, there is nothing to be lost by taking advantage of the test.

For information on this programme, which is gradually being introduced throughout the UK during 2006/7, speak to your GP or contact the national office for details: 0114 271 1060; or email: [info@cancerscreening.nhs.uk](mailto:info@cancerscreening.nhs.uk)

Lepicol is a wheat-free fibre, pre- and probiotic combination containing psyllium husks, designed to keep bowels healthy and functioning normally. The product works to normalise transit time in the gut, slowing it down in diarrhoea sufferers and speeding it up in constipation sufferers. It is also of benefit for IBS sufferers, as the ingredients work to gradually balance the levels of bacteria in the gut.

The supplement can be taken every day to promote healthy bowel action, and comes as taste free powder which can be sprinkled on cereal or diluted into juice. There are no adverse side effects, and you do not have to be a sufferer from existing bowel problems to benefit. The stuff comes in a huge pot which costs £7.99 and is available from Boots and all health food stores.

#### **5. Blood Pressure Testing**

Between 11 – 17 September you can get your blood pressure tested free at a Pressure Station near you. The testing, organised by the Blood Pressure Association, is part of their Know Your Numbers campaign to encourage the population to keep their blood pressure at healthy levels. High blood pressure is a particular risk for those aged 65 and over.

Pressure stations are being set up at supermarkets, shopping centres, motorway service stations and similar venues. To find your nearest Station, log on to [www.bpassoc.org.uk](http://www.bpassoc.org.uk) or call 020 8772 4992.