

Our Vision

We provide compassionate care
with our community, in our community.

If you would like to give feedback on
any of our services please contact:

Email: user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net

Telephone: 028 9442 4655

 Northern Health and Social Care Trust

 @NHSCTrust

www.northerntrust.hscni.net

Over-the-counter codeine

Know the risks



You have been given this leaflet because you may be using more than the recommended amount of over-the-counter (OTC) codeine products.

Prolonged use of codeine can cause side effects, such as constipation, headaches, and dependence. Dependence on codeine can happen quickly, and we can build a tolerance to these medications, meaning that we require more over time to achieve the same effect. **This can happen without us even noticing it.**

Dependence is not the only thing to be worried about when we use too much OTC codeine. OTC codeine products can contain other medications, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. Some people may feel the need to use higher than the recommended limits to achieve an effect from codeine, but do not realise that they are overdosing on paracetamol or ibuprofen. This can be very dangerous, and can cause damage to the **gastrointestinal syndrome, our livers, or our kidneys.**

If you think that you have been using too much OTC codeine, the Community Addiction Service can support you with this. This support can involve safe reduction plans, and in some cases, medication to substitute the codeine that you are taking.

The kinds of interventions available from the Community Addiction Service are as follows:

Opioid substitution

Psychosocial support

Liaising with your GP

Inpatient treatment

Access to residential rehab

Psychology

You can access support from our service by speaking with your pharmacist, your GP, or by contacting us on 02825317162. We will be happy to provide you with information when you call.