

OTC Analgesics and Cough, Cold and Flu Remedies - UK - 2023

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The market forecast for value sales of OTC analgesics and cough, cold and flu remedies amid the cost-of-living crisis.
- How the income squeeze will impact consumer behaviour and purchasing habits.
- The fastest-rising claims among in the OTC analgesics and cough, cold and flu remedies category.
- Experience of ailments and how consumers are treating them.
- The prioritisation of active ingredients over brand names and how brands can react.
- Attitudes towards remedy brands and how brands can better meet consumer interest in natural ingredients and education on remedies.

Own-label remedies are well regarded as 76% of adults agree own-label pain relief remedies are just as effective as brand-name options, while 71% say the same about cough, cold and flu remedies, revealing a need for brands to assert their expertise and points of differentiation. However, despite positive perceptions, own-label OTC performance was mixed in 2022.

The essential nature of the category and the value consumers place on their health mean the category is fairly well shielded from the typical behaviours brought on by the income squeeze like trading down. However, brands should still assert their expertise to remain competitive.

The lower usage of cold, cough and flu remedies among adults aged 18-24 is the biggest threat to the category as this demographic are the most likely to experience coughs, colds and flus. Brands must therefore better target this age group with digital advertising.

The biggest opportunity for the category is innovation that meets the interest in natural ingredients. Pharmaceutical brands are in a good position to launch natural alternatives to traditional remedies that benefit from the trust



“The market has surpassed its pre-pandemic value as cases of cough, cold and flu have all risen to almost pre-COVID-19 levels. The categories are also less impacted by the income squeeze compared to others, as the infrequent purchase of products, alongside the premium consumers place on their health, means there is a willingness to pay more.”

– Georgia Stafford, Research Analyst

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consumers place in a familiar brand. These products will meet the appetite for natural ingredients and even encourage trading up if they are more expensive.

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