

MEDICINES MANAGEMENT

SEL Management of Vitamin D insufficiency and deficiency in the adult guideline (excludes chronic kidney disease ≥stage 4)

The guideline was reviewed and updated in October 2023.

For Deficiency (25(OH)D level <25nmol/L)

1st line treatment option:

- Prescribe Plenachol® 40,000iu capsules – one capsule weekly for 7 weeks. Check Vitamin D level at 12 weeks to allow the level to plateau.

For Insufficiency and Sufficiency (≥25(OH)D level 25nmol/L)

Routine replacement//Maintenance therapy:

- Give lifestyle advice such as [NHS patient information](#)
- Recommend OTC oral colecalciferol 800-2000 units daily suitable year-round to be initiated one month after loading dose completed.
- Prescribe Stexerol-D3® 1,000 unit tablets **ONLY** for patients with conditions exempt from NHSE self-care directive. Refer to [SEL self-care leaflet](#).

Action for healthcare professionals: Please refer to the guidelines for more information.

Central Alerting System/National Patient Safety (CAS/NPSA) Alert

[NatPSA_2024_001_DHSC.pdf](#) (published on 3 Jan 2024) supersedes [NatPSA/2023/008/DHSC](#) and provides further background and clinical information and actions for providers. The supply of glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RAs) continue to be limited, with supply not expected to return to normal until at least the end of 2024.

- Rybelsus® (semaglutide) tablets are now available in sufficient quantities to support initiation of GLP-1 RA treatment in people with type 2 diabetes (T2DM) in whom new initiation of GLP-1 RA therapy would be clinically appropriate.
- Byetta® (exenatide) will be discontinued in March 2024.
- Victoza® (liraglutide) continues to be out of stock and further stock is not expected until end of 2024.
- Saxenda® (liraglutide) and Wegovy® (semaglutide) remain available via specialist weight management services.

Action for prescriber: Do not prescribe GLP-1 RAs licensed for T2DM for off-label indications. Existing stock must be conserved for patients with T2DM to mitigate the risk of impaired access to treatment and increased risk in diabetes related complications. If necessary to initiate or switch a patient to Rybelsus®, prescribers should counsel their patient on the following dose titration schedule and administration instructions for Rybelsus®. Please use this in conjunction with [SEL GLP1 pathway](#).

Discontinuation of Microdot Max Glucose Test Strips

Microdot® Max glucose test strips will be discontinued due to permanent supply failure with immediate effect.

Action for practices: Identify and review patients currently on Microdot® Max test strips and switch them to NHS-recommended meters and test strips that [can be found here](#).

The Monthly Drug Tariff Watch

[The Drug Tariff Watch](#) is updated monthly to provide updates on high impacted medicine shortages, price concession and drug tariff prices.

MEDICINES MANAGEMENT

Safety measures for medicines containing pseudoephedrine to minimize serious side effects.

The European Medicines Agency safety committee recommends new safety measures for medicines containing pseudoephedrine, to minimise risks of posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) and reversible cerebral vasoconstriction syndrome (RCVS). The safety measure extends to avoiding use in patients with severe or uncontrolled hypertension, and severe acute chronic kidney disease/ renal failure. **Action for healthcare professionals:** Advise patients to stop using the medication and seek medical help if they develop symptoms of PRES or RCVS, such as severe headache with a sudden onset, feeling sick, vomiting, confusion, seizures, and visual disturbances.

NHS England warns prescribers about fatal interaction between tramadol and warfarin.

NHS advised taking action to raise awareness about the fatal interaction between tramadol and warfarin, following the death of a patient due to exceptional blood thinning with a fatal INR 11.6, resulting in death from brain haemorrhage. BNF will now include an interaction message between tramadol and warfarin/other coumarin anticoagulants.

Action for healthcare professionals: Review patients who are taking tramadol with warfarin/other coumarin anticoagulants and avoid initiating tramadol in such patients.

Azathioprine 75mg & 100mg tablets – risk of overdose if wrong dose prescribed or dispensed

These two new strengths of azathioprine are not currently available in the UK. Caution is required to prescribe and dispense the dose intended. In the event of an overdose, the most likely effect is bone marrow suppression. Signs and symptoms include ulceration of the throat, fever, and infections. Bruising, bleeding, and fatigue may occur.

Consultation on Role of Incentive Schemes in General Practice

NHS has launched a consultation to seek feedback from primary care clinicians to share their views and insights on the role of incentive schemes in general practice, mainly Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) and Investment and Impact Fund (IIF) in General Practice. Please [feedback your view](#) on the role of incentive schemes by **11:59pm on Thursday 7 March 2024**.

Potential contamination of some carbomer-containing lubricating eye products with Burkholderia cenocepacia - measures to reduce patient risk

UKHSA is investigating an outbreak of *Burkholderia cenocepacia* involving individuals across the UK. **Action for healthcare professionals:** As a precautionary measure, while further testing is conducted, avoid use of all carbomer-containing lubricating eye products for at risk patients.

MEDICINES MANAGEMENT

Cost-effective Prescribing of Macrogol Oral Powder Sachets

Due to the electronic prescribing system used in acute trust, macrogol 3350 will appear on the discharge summary, when transcribing onto EMIS Macrogol 3350 Oral 8.5g Sachets (£129.81 per 28 sachets) is the only product appear for selection. Macrogol 3350 oral 8.5g contains the same ingredient as Macrogol NPF 13.5g Sachets (£4.99 per 30 sachets), which more cost-effective.

Action for healthcare professionals: Please select and prescribe Macrogol NPF 13.5g Sachets in place of Macrogol 3350 Oral Powder 8.5g Sachets.

MHRA authorises new indication for Anastrozole - prevention of breast cancer in postmenopausal women.

Anastrozole has already been in use as *off-label* for *prevention of breast cancer in postmenopausal women*. Its' use for this indication is now licensed. Anastrozole's current formulary status is **Amber 1** (treatment initiation in primary care following recommendation from an appropriate specialist).

Action for healthcare professionals: Where women have a clinically significant family history of breast cancer as defined in [NICE CG164](#) guideline, refer patient to specialist for consideration of genetic testing/treatment.

NHS Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Tests Supply Service

The walk-in advanced service offers at-risk patients eligible for COVID-19 treatments to collect LFD tests from participating community pharmacies (CPs). A positive LFD test will be used to inform a clinical assessment to determine whether the patient is suitable/benefits from COVID-19 treatment. **Action for practices:** Refer to **Attachment 1** for Greenwich CPs providing the service.

People with a high genetic risk of coronary heart disease benefit (CHD) most from switching sitting for physical activity

A study investigating the impact of physical activity on CHD risk by monitoring participants with wrist devices for a week revealed:

- Substituting 60 minutes of sitting with moderate to vigorous physical activity daily led to a 9% lower CHD risk, irrespective of genetic predisposition.
- Those with the highest genetic risk experienced greater benefits, showing significant reductions in their future CHD likelihood compared to low-genetic-risk individuals.

Further clarification is required to draw a casual association between GLP-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RA) and thoughts of self-harm/suicide.

Though the EMA safety committee could not conclude a casual association between GLP-1 RA and thoughts of self-harm/suicide, The topic will be rediscussed in April 2024, to address several issues that still need to be clarified by the respective marketing authorisation holder for GLP-1 RAs.

Newly launched Freestyle Libre 3 Sensors

Freestyle Libre 3 has been added to the Appliances section in Part IXA of the [Drug Tariff](#). It is not interchangeable with Freestyle Libre 2 Sensors and requires a different reader or the Freestyle LibreLink app to scan and receive the results.

New BNF Iron Supplement Dose Recommendation

Recent data suggest that lower doses of iron salts and infrequent administration may be just as effective as taking them 2-3 times a day, whilst reducing adverse effects. BNF has been updated to reduce the recommended dose to ONE tablet a day, or alternative day. Refer to BNF section of [ferrous sulfate](#) and [ferrous fumarate](#).

MEDICINES MANAGEMENT

Adrenaline auto-injector prescription for patients at risk of anaphylaxis: BSACI guidance for primary care

This guidance is for primary care clinicians managing patients who have either experienced anaphylaxis or may be at risk of anaphylaxis.

Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) Newly Qualified Pharmacist Programme 2023-24 – Open for registration

Please see the information below and [website](#) for further information about the training offer provided and eligibility.

Key dates – Cohort 6:

- Applications close on **18th March 2024**
- Programme start date is **25th March 2024**.

New and updated guidelines

- **New NICE TA942 – Empagliflozin for treating chronic kidney disease**
- **New SIGN 169 – Perinatal mental health conditions**
- **Updated NICE CG185- bipolar disorder: assessment and management**
- **Updated NICE QS140 update – Transition from children to adult services**
- **Updated NICE CG185 – bipolar disorder: assessment and management**
- **Updated NICE NG101 – Early and locally advanced breast cancer: diagnosis and management.**

Clinical Knowledge Summaries

- **Allergic rhinitis:** Includes prescribing information on intranasal corticosteroid, combined intranasal corticosteroid and antihistamine spray.
- **Psoriasis:** Aqueous cream has been removed as a soap substitute in line with the National Eczema Society.
- **Sarcoidosis:** Covers diagnosis and management of sarcoidosis

PrescQIPP Bulletin

- **Bulletin 238: Prescribing on the NHS following a private consultation.** - Discusses issues around private and NHS interface and when it would be appropriate/inappropriate to issue prescriptions on the NHS.
- **Bulletin 336: Reducing opioid prescribing in chronic pain** - Discusses the process and resources available to support opioid reduction, including an audit and searches.
- **Bulletin 337: Male Sexual Dysfunction** - This bulletin covers erectile dysfunction and premature ejaculation in men and prescribes cost-effective treatment first-line.
- **Bulletin 338: Stoma** - Advice on appropriate stoma prescribing, appropriate quantities for types of stomas.

Specialist Pharmacy Service Update

- Defining and understanding medication adherence [medication adherence](#).
- **Understanding direct oral anticoagulant interactions**, and how to [manage these interactions](#).

Contact Details

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