

Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team

Prescribing and Medicines Management – COVID-19 Newsletter

Issue (2) 31st of March 2020

Please send all medicines queries relating to COVID-19 to wkccg.gpscovid19@nhs.net

Requests for Baby Milk Formulation Feeds

We have not received any information regarding product shortage of formula feeds. Like other consumer goods, panic buying and stockpiling is likely to have caused temporary shortages and retailers are implementing measures to correct this. Manufacturers of several popular baby formula feed are working with retailers to deal with supermarkets shortage. Most supermarkets are also able to fulfil online orders for baby milk; although there might be restrictions on quantities.

GPs are advised not to prescribe formula feed where there is no clinical need.

British Society for Rheumatology Guidance

The British Society for Rheumatology guidance recommends that all patients should continue to take their medication unless directed otherwise by their rheumatology team or GP. If you are planning to start or switch a patient to a new medication this may now need to be reviewed.

Patients on long-term glucocorticoids (steroids, prednisolone) should not stop these abruptly.

The guidance also advises that if patients develop symptoms of any infection, established practice should be followed and immunosuppressive therapy paused for the duration of the infection and until they feel well, **in consultation** with their rheumatology team. For those on glucocorticoids, the expectation is that treatment should not be stopped abruptly and advice should be sought from their treating team.

The full COVID-19 guidance is available at <https://www.rheumatology.org.uk/news-policy/details/covid19-coronavirus-update-members>

For further information please see the NHS England guidance for the management of rheumatology patients: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/clinical-guide-rheumatology-patients-v1-19-march-2020.pdf>

See also the British Society for Rheumatology guidance for identifying patients for shielding: https://www.rheumatology.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Rheumatology_advice_coronavirus_immunosuppressed_patients_220320.pdf?ver=2020-03-24-171132-407

COVID PROTECT (Eclipse)

COVID PROTECT is part of Eclipse which is installed in all practices in East Kent, West Kent, Medway and Swale and can help identify vulnerable patients. We will be in touch in the coming days to let you know how we will support and who your contact will be. In the meantime if you wish to access the searches please follow the instructions below:

To access COVID PROTECT searches: login in to www.nhspathways.org using your Eclipse login details. Then click on the COVID-19 icon. This will then highlight the patients in each vulnerable patient priority group.

Multi-Compartment Aids (MCA) /Blister Pack Dispensing

As part of business continuity planning, community pharmacies are currently reassessing the provision of MCAs/ Blister Packs to patients. This process is not about removing the service from all patients, but protecting the

most vulnerable in society who need it. All patients receiving MCAs will be assessed to determine the level of risk posed to the individual by removing the service.

Low risk patients are likely to have the MCA service removed and initiate supply in the manufacturer's original packs with a pre-printed reminder chart / Medicine Administration Record (MAR) Charts, thus freeing up capacity to enable the pharmacy team to start assessments with patients who are in the medium risk group. This will include where the patient does NOT require MCA under the Disability & Discrimination Act but social care/care homes insist on MCAs to support administration – this will potentially STOP for these patients as it is NOT based on patient need but based on 'agency' need. Please note there is no legal basis or requirement for pharmacies to dispense blisters just because the carer can't directly administer from original packs.

To support the patient review process, a template letter has been provided by the PSNC for pharmacies to share with their patients explaining the reasons behind the review and emphasising that this is about ensuring that all patients receive the care they require in these challenging times. Further information is available from the PSNC at their website: <https://psnc.org.uk/the-healthcare-landscape/covid19/business-continuity/>.

Inhalers Supply Update

Salbutamol inhalers

As of Tuesday 31st March 2020, Ventolin and Salamol are available from major wholesales.

Beclometasone inhalers

Clenil 100mcg inhaler is out of stock until at least mid-April.

Qvar 50mcg inhaler is currently out of stock with all wholesalers

Soprobec inhaler is same particle size and same type of inhaler device. Subject to high demand – stock availability is fluctuating due to market issues. Distribution is getting through to AAH and Alliance, but reports suggest that workforce shortages at some of the depots mean that some stock is waiting in loading bays longer than normal. 107,000 units of 100mcg have been released for distribution today.

Kelhale 100mcg inhaler stock availability is fluctuating due to massive demand. Currently all wholesalers are out of stock of these lines.