

Medicines Optimisation Newsletter

[September 2023] (Issue No. 50)



- [Hypomagnesaemia in Adults – New Primary Care Guidance](#)
- [New Oral Nutritional Supplement \(ONS\) Guidelines in Kent and Medway](#)
- [Kent and Medway Asthma Guidance](#)
- [Triptorelin Formulary Addition](#)
- [New guidelines and formulary changes for insulin pen needles, meters, test strips and lancets](#)
- [High strength insulin](#)
- [National Patient Safety Alert – Shortage of GLP-1 Receptor Agonists](#)
- [MHRA Drug Safety Update](#)
- [Shortages](#)
- [ADHD Medication Shortages](#)
- [The 16th Royal Marsden Opioid, Cannabinoid & Gabapentinoid Conference](#)
- [Using Skin Barriers with Sensors of Glucose Monitoring Systems](#)

Kent and Medway ICB Updates

Hypomagnesaemia in Adults – New Primary Care Guidance

The Integrated Medicines Optimisation Committee (IMOC) have recently approved new guidance for hypomagnesaemia in adults. This guidance includes information on the background, risk factors and potential causes, signs and symptoms and investigations and management, and can be found on your local formulary website.

Please share this with other members of your team and consider additional monitoring of magnesium in accordance to the guidance.

New Oral Nutritional Supplement (ONS) Guidelines in Kent and Medway

In August 2023, ONS guidelines were approved at IMOC for use across Kent & Medway.

This guideline has been designed to support primary care prescribers (including clinicians in General Practice and community dietitians) initiating oral nutrition support for adults within Kent and Medway. It includes instructions on how to initiate patients on Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) following the use of the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) in patients where dietary interventions have failed (food first approach). The guidelines support national guidance from NICE and other health organisations.

The ratified ONS documents include: ONS Guidelines, ONS Quick Reference Guide and ONS Product Guide.

Please find the approved guidelines embedded below, which can now be used and shared.

The guidelines will be uploaded to all formulary websites in due course.

Along with the guidelines being approved and updated, the formulary websites will also be updated in due course to reflect this, for now please use the ONS Product Guide embedded below for formulary choices.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this newsletter is accurate and up to date at the time of publication. Please be aware that information about medicines and therapeutics will change over time, and that information may not be current after the initial date of publication. Please take note of the publication date and seek further advice if in any doubt about the accuracy of the information. The information contained in this newsletter is the best available from the resources at our disposal at the time. Acronyms used are standard formulary. This newsletter is produced by the NHS Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team on behalf of the Kent & Medway ICB. For all correspondence including any queries, please contact the Medicines Optimisation team email: kmicb.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net

ONS Guidelines [k-m-ons-guidelines-for-primary-care.pdf \(medwayswaleformulary.co.uk\)](https://www.medwayswaleformulary.co.uk/k-m-ons-guidelines-for-primary-care.pdf)

ONS Quick reference [km-ons-quick-reference-guide.pdf \(medwayswaleformulary.co.uk\)](https://www.medwayswaleformulary.co.uk/km-ons-quick-reference-guide.pdf)

ONS Product Guide [km-ons-product-guide.pdf \(medwayswaleformulary.co.uk\)](https://www.medwayswaleformulary.co.uk/km-ons-product-guide.pdf)

Kent and Medway Asthma Guidance

IMOC have recently approved the Guidelines for the Management of Asthma in Adults and Children.

Please see your respective formularies for the guidelines.

DGS HCP: <https://www.dgsdvhformulary.nhs.uk/kent-and-medway-guidance/3-respiratory-system/asthma-guidelines/>

Medway & Swale: <https://www.medwayswaleformulary.co.uk/therapeutic-sections/3-respiratory-system/31-airways-disease-obstructive/>

East Kent: <https://www.eastkentformulary.nhs.uk/therapeutic-sections/3-respiratory/31-airways-disease-obstructive/>

West Kent: Still in process of being uploaded. Please use other HCP links above.

We would also like to express our gratitude to everyone who attended the engagement and training sessions on the Management of Asthma in adults and children using the GINA approach.

For those who couldn't attend but would like the opportunity to catch up on the session, please see the links to the recorded sessions below:

For the 6th September: [Asthma meeting - 1.00 pm -2.00 pm-20230906_130831-Meeting Recording.mp4](#)

For the 12th September: [BACK-UP LINK Medicines Optimisation Department on Management of Asthma guidelines \(Using GINA approach\)- KMICB Meds Opt team-20230912_192939-Meeting Recording.mp4](#)

For any difficulties accessing the link to the recording, please contact kmpcth@nhs.net

Please see slides presented during the session embedded below:



Asthma slides_.pptx

If you would like more information regarding the guidelines or would like some training, please contact the Medicines Optimisation Respiratory Team:

Cath Cooksey- cath.cooksey@nhs.net

Sola Akeremale- solaju.akeremale@nhs.net

Triptorelin Formulary Addition

Triptorelin 6- monthly injections (22.5mg) are now available on formularies across Kent and Medway. The injections are for specialist initiation only but can be continued in primary care. This formulary addition helps to align formularies across KMICB.

The aim of the alignment is to reduce patient waiting times so patients have the option of receiving their injections at 6 monthly intervals rather than the current 3-month interval. This would in turn reduce GP workload.

Please see respective formularies for more information.

Guidelines and Formulary Choices for Blood Glucose & Ketone Meters, Test Strips & Lancets, and Insulin Pen Needles

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this newsletter is accurate and up to date at the time of publication. Please be aware that information about medicines and therapeutics will change over time, and that information may not be current after the initial date of publication. Please take note of the publication date and seek further advice if in any doubt about the accuracy of the information. The information contained in this newsletter is the best available from the resources at our disposal at the time. Acronyms used are standard formulary. This newsletter is produced by the NHS Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team on behalf of the Kent & Medway ICB. For all correspondence including any queries, please contact the Medicines Optimisation team email: kmicb.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net

In August 2023, the following guidelines were approved at IMOC for use across Kent & Medway (for both primary and secondary care).

- **Guidelines for self-monitoring of blood glucose (SMBG) and ketones, and preferred formulary choices of blood glucose and ketone meters, test strips and lancets in adults, young people and children who have diabetes in Kent and Medway**
- **Guidance on insulin pen needles and preferred formulary choices for Kent and Medway**

The approved guidelines can now be used and shared. The guidelines have been, or will be in due course, uploaded to all formulary websites.

Along with the guidelines being approved, the formularies for these products were reviewed and have been aligned across Kent & Medway, in line with NHS England guidance. **The agreed formulary choices are listed within the guidelines.** The formulary websites will also be updated in due course to reflect this.

The Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team will be reaching out to practices regarding **implementing the formulary changes in line with the new guidelines.** Following agreement by practices, patients will be switched, where appropriate, if they are prescribed non-formulary blood glucose and ketone meters and the associated test strips and lancets, and/or non-formulary insulin pen needles, to a product on formulary chosen by the practice. More information will be provided when practices are contacted about this.

National Updates

High Strength Insulin

The Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team would like to remind colleagues about:

- The **shortage of Tresiba (insulin degludec) FlexTouch 100 units/ml solution for injection pre-filled pens.** A tier 2 medicines supply notification (MSN) was issued on 24th of May 2023 and cascaded to practices on 25th May 2023. The contents of the MSN can be viewed on the [Medicines Supply Tool](#). The Tool also details any updates and changes to re-supply dates. To access the Tool you will be required to register (free) with the [SPS website](#).
- **The MHRA drug safety update [High strength, fixed combination and biosimilar insulin products: minimising the risk of medication error](#).**

It is important that healthcare professionals understand **the strengths of available insulin products, the differences between them and how to use them correctly; to minimise the risk of medication errors,** such as the wrong insulin dose being administered.

High strength insulins have concentrations greater than 100 units/ml. Examples of insulin products which have high strength preparations available include, for example:

- Toujeo (insulin glargine 300 units/ml).
- Humalog (insulin lispro 200 units/ml).
- Tresiba (insulin degludec 200 units/ml).

The MHRA alert includes information on:

- **Dose conversion when switching between standard and high strength insulin products.**
- The **'dose step'**, which is a term to define how patients dial up the required drug dose on the pre-filled pen.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this newsletter is accurate and up to date at the time of publication. Please be aware that information about medicines and therapeutics will change over time, and that information may not be current after the initial date of publication. Please take note of the publication date and seek further advice if in any doubt about the accuracy of the information. The information contained in this newsletter is the best available from the resources at our disposal at the time. Acronyms used are standard formulary. This newsletter is produced by the NHS Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team on behalf of the Kent & Medway ICB. For all correspondence including any queries, please contact the Medicines Optimisation team email: kmicb.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net

Please also see the MHRA Drug Safety Update on [Insulin Degludec \(Tresiba\): available in additional higher strength](#).

General prescribing advice for high strength insulins:

- Consult the individual Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) and educational material before prescribing.
- Prescribe insulin by **brand name**. Include the **strength (units per ml)** and **presentation** (e.g., cartridge or disposable pen). Write the **insulin dose in units** (“units” to be spelled out and in lower case), **timing** and **frequency**.
- **The pen device shows the number of units of insulin to be injected irrespective of strength; therefore, the insulin dose may stay the same.**
- Seek advice on blood glucose monitoring and dose adjustment from the Diabetes Specialist Team if unsure.
- Check the patient has:
 - Received appropriate training on the correct use of the product and understands the dose required and use of the pen device.
 - Read and understands the patient leaflet and any patient education material.

National Patient Safety Alert – Shortage of GLP-1 Receptor Agonists

The Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team would like to remind colleagues about the National Patient Safety Alert (NPSA) from the DHSC on the shortage of Glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RAs). This NPSA was issued and cascaded on the 18th of July 2023.

This is a safety critical NPSA and is for action by all organisations involved in the prescribing and dispensing of GLP-1 Ras **by 18th October 2023**. The alert can be found attached on the following webpage: [CAS-ViewAlert \(mhra.gov.uk\)](#).

The alert contains:

- Explanation of the identified safety issue.
- Actions required, to be completed by the 18th of October 2023
- GLP-1 RAs affected.
- Links to clinical guidance, which aims to support clinicians in choosing suitable alternative glucose lowering therapies to GLP-1 RAs during this period of national shortage.

Key messages from the alert:

- **The off-label use of these agents for the management of obesity is strongly discouraged.**
- **Existing stock must be conserved for use in patients with diabetes.**
- Only prescribe GLP-1 RAs for their licensed indications.
- Do not initiate new patients on GLP-1 RAs for the duration of the shortage.
- Do not prescribe excessive quantities; limit prescribing to minimise risk to the supply chain whilst acknowledging the needs of the patient.

MHRA Drug Safety Update – August 2023

The latest MHRA Drug Safety Updates can be accessed at [Drug Safety Update - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) . This includes links to alerts, recalls and safety information and to the monthly Drug Safety Update PDF newsletter.

The August 2023 Drug Safety Update includes:

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this newsletter is accurate and up to date at the time of publication. Please be aware that information about medicines and therapeutics will change over time, and that information may not be current after the initial date of publication. Please take note of the publication date and seek further advice if in any doubt about the accuracy of the information. The information contained in this newsletter is the best available from the resources at our disposal at the time. Acronyms used are standard formulary. This newsletter is produced by the NHS Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team on behalf of the Kent & Medway ICB. For all correspondence including any queries, please contact the Medicines Optimisation team email: kmicb.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net

[Fluoroquinolone antibiotics: reminder of the risk of disabling and potentially long-lasting or irreversible side effects - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Healthcare professionals prescribing fluoroquinolone antibiotics (ciprofloxacin, delafloxacin, levofloxacin, moxifloxacin, ofloxacin) are reminded to be alert to the risk of disabling and potentially long-lasting or irreversible side effects. Do not prescribe fluoroquinolones for non-severe or self-limiting infections, or for mild to moderate infections (such as in acute exacerbation of chronic bronchitis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) unless other antibiotics that are commonly recommended for these infections are considered inappropriate. Fluoroquinolone treatment should be discontinued at the first signs of a serious adverse reaction, including tendon pain or inflammation.

[Methotrexate: advise patients to take precautions in the sun to avoid photosensitivity reactions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Photosensitivity reactions (which include phototoxicity, where a drug is activated by exposure to UV light and causes damage to the skin that can look and feel like a sunburn or a rash) are known side effects of methotrexate treatment and can occur with both low-dose and high-dose treatment.

Reactions manifest as severe sunburn such as rashes with papules or blistering, with some patients reporting swelling; rarely, photosensitivity reactions have contributed to deaths from secondary infections.

Healthcare professionals, including those prescribing and dispensing methotrexate, should remind patients to take precautions to protect themselves from the sun and UV rays.

Report suspected adverse drug reactions associated with methotrexate on a [Yellow Card](#).

Suggested action for GP Practices:

Consider sending a reminder to patients for whom you are prescribing Methotrexate under shared care, as per the MHRA advice for healthcare professionals to provide to patients and caregivers ([Here](#)).

[Valproate: re-analysis of study on risks in children of men taking valproate - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

The MHRA are providing an update on a retrospective observational study on the risk to children born to men who took valproate in the 3 months before conception and on the need for the re-analysis of the data from this study before conclusions can be drawn. No action is needed from patients. It is vitally important that patients do not stop taking valproate unless they are advised by their specialist to do so. For female patients, healthcare professionals should continue to follow the existing strict precautions related to preventing the use of valproate in pregnancy (Valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme).

[Letters and medicine recalls sent to healthcare professionals in July 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Please follow the link in the titles above for more information and resources.

The MHRA Central Alerting System alerts can be accessed at <https://www.cas.mhra.gov.uk/Home.aspx>

Shortages

Please find the medicines shortages update (up until 13th September 2023) attached. Practices are encouraged to register for access to the SPS website <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/> and access the full medicines supply tool directly in real time.

[shortages-summary-issue-50-sep-23.pdf \(medwayswaleformulary.co.uk\)](#)

ADHD Medication Shortages

We would like to advise practices of the following ADHD medication shortages:

Atomoxetine

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this newsletter is accurate and up to date at the time of publication. Please be aware that information about medicines and therapeutics will change over time, and that information may not be current after the initial date of publication. Please take note of the publication date and seek further advice if in any doubt about the accuracy of the information. The information contained in this newsletter is the best available from the resources at our disposal at the time. Acronyms used are standard formulary. This newsletter is produced by the NHS Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team on behalf of the Kent & Medway ICB. For all correspondence including any queries, please contact the Medicines Optimisation team email: kmicb.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) published a [Medicine Supply Notification \(MSN\) on 21 July 2023 for atomoxetine 40mg and 60mg capsules](#).

There are limited supplies of **atomoxetine 40mg and 60mg capsules**, with an anticipated resupply date of Saturday 30 September 2023.

Refer to the [atomoxetine MSN](#) for full details and the [Specialist Pharmacy Service Medicines Supply Tool](#) (content managed by the DHSC, requires registration and login) for up-to-date national information.

Methylphenidate

There is a shortage of Methylphenidate prolonged release tablets - **Xenidate XL 27mg tablets** (Viatris UK Healthcare Ltd), with an anticipated resupply date of 2 October 2023.

Refer to the [Specialist Pharmacy Service Medicines Supply Tool](#) (content managed by the DHSC, requires registration and login) for further information.

It is important that GPs contact the providers in the first instance, then if a review is needed by specialists to refer through KCHFT for a medication review.

The 16th Royal Marsden Opioid, Cannabinoid & Gabapentinoid Conference

The 16th Royal Marsden Opioid, Cannabinoid & Gabapentinoid Conference is taking place on the 23-24 November 2023. The conference offers up to date discussions with talks concerning the contemporaneous issues of these drugs from experts in this field. To book online please see the following [link](#).

Using Skin Barriers with Sensors of Glucose Monitoring Systems

The Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team would like to remind colleagues about the following MHRA drug safety updates, which are about **using barrier methods to reduce skin reactions to the sensor adhesive** of glucose monitoring systems, which **may affect the performance of the device**:

- [FreeStyle Libre flash glucose sensor – Use of barrier methods to reduce skin reactions to the sensor adhesive](#)
- [Dexcom G6 Sensor: untested barrier methods to reduce skin reactions](#)

Using barrier creams may also not be appropriate to aid removing the sensors and any remaining adhesive.

The manufacturers of glucose monitoring systems, and their associated sensors, provide guidance on removing/replacing sensors. **Please consult the manufacturer's guidance/educational material** for each specific glucose monitoring system before advising patients how to remove sensors.

For example:

FreeStyle Libre 2 system: [Tutorials & Downloads | Freestyle Libre | Abbott](#)

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this newsletter is accurate and up to date at the time of publication. Please be aware that information about medicines and therapeutics will change over time, and that information may not be current after the initial date of publication. Please take note of the publication date and seek further advice if in any doubt about the accuracy of the information. The information contained in this newsletter is the best available from the resources at our disposal at the time. Acronyms used are standard formulary. This newsletter is produced by the NHS Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Team on behalf of the Kent & Medway ICB. For all correspondence including any queries, please contact the Medicines Optimisation team email: kmicb.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net