

COVID Medicines Optimisation Update – 11 May 2020

See here for all updates to the [COVID-19](#) section of the website. Of note this week is:

Azathioprine Supplies in Community

Please see [here](#) the latest update regarding azathioprine supplies in the community.

Clenil Modulite® 100 mcg (beclomethasone) : release of batch specification variation

As you will be aware there has been a supply problem with Clenil® products. This in the majority has been due to increased demand however there has been a manufacturing issue with the 100mcg strength. To address this problem Chiesi are releasing additional batches of Clenil 100mcg into the UK supply chain. There is no difference in the contents of the inhaler however the inhalers are different in appearance. **Instead of the usual brown inhaler and beige cap these batches will be beige with a yellow cap.** There is no embossing on the beige actuator and there is no dose counter.

Further information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.chiesi.uk.com/supply-of-chiesi-products#%E2%80%8B>

Vitamin D

There has been some recent media interest around vitamin D being associated with COVID-19. There has been no evidence to back up these reports; however it may be prudent to opportunistically promote PHE advice around vitamin D, which can be found [here](#), particularly if patients are shielding and are spending limited time outside. If adult patients have a history of vitamin D deficiency then a higher dose (800-1000units /20-25micrograms/day) may be indicated (see [local algorithm](#)).

Hydroxycarbamide

There is a shared care protocol **SCP** for hydroxycarbamide to be prescribed and monitored in primary care for certain specified conditions, with specialist oversight of the blood results. Following review of the process, the haematologists have advised that all prescribing and monitoring should be the specialist's responsibility; APG has approved reclassification of hydroxycarbamide to a red traffic light drug and for the SCP to be retired. GPs are requested to contact the specialist regarding patients currently prescribed hydroxycarbamide in primary care. The specialist will assess patients on an individual basis to determine whether the monitoring of FBC can be extended during the COVID-19 pandemic and resume prescribing and monitoring within secondary care.

NICE COVID-19 rapid guideline: managing suspected or confirmed pneumonia in adults in the community - update

The above rapid guideline ([NG165](#)) was published by NICE on 3 April 2020. The purpose of this guideline is to ensure the best treatment for adults with suspected or confirmed pneumonia in the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NICE has recently updated these guidelines (23 April 2020) with further clarification on antibiotic treatment (section 4.8). The main points from the update are summarised below:

1. Doxycycline remains the first choice antibiotic at a dose of 200mg on the first day followed by 100mg once daily for 4 days i.e. a total course of 5 days (clarification of course length);

2. Doxycycline is preferred during the COVID-19 pandemic as it has a broader spectrum of activity than amoxicillin, particularly against *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* and *Staphylococcus aureus*. These atypicals are more likely to be secondary causes of bacterial pneumonia during the pandemic (rationale behind choice of first line treatment).

End of Life

To support timely access to end of life medication we have strengthened commissioning arrangements with the palliative care pharmacies and a [flow chart](#) has been developed to support HCPs/patients locate timely supplies.

Emergency Contraception Provision

During the current COVID-19 pandemic PCS have been closely monitoring the access to their emergency contraception service. They have recorded a decline in uptake, but at the same time an increase in requests for terminations. In response, they would like to highlight three key points to help avoid unwanted pregnancies

- The upper age limit (currently 25 years) has temporarily been removed for the provision of free EC via approved community pharmacies.
 - Note: there are three pharmacies included in this service – The Wicker, Sheffield Late Night Pharmacy and Asda Parsons Cross.
- GP practices that are unable fulfil a request for EC should direct the patient to the EC telephone call-back service (0114 226 8888)
 - Open Monday to Friday.
 - Outside of these times, direct patients to the above community pharmacies or the NHS Walk-in Centre on Broad Lane.
- A team of sexual health practitioners are available to fit emergency IUDs and offer general contraception advice over the telephone (0114 226 8888)

Diabetes mellitus Diagnostic and Monitoring Devices

In light of the Covid-19 situation it may be necessary for your patients with Type 1 diabetes to test for ketones in line with Sick Day Rules advice. The meters of choice in the Sheffield Formulary are: Fora Advanced (B Braun) and CareSens Dual (Spirit Healthcare). B Braun and Spirit Healthcare can provide free meters for your patients along with educational literature and recommendations on when they should test. The contact information for

B Braun is emily.slater@bbraun.com; phone 07528968208;

Spirit Healthcare is neil.Harris@spirit-healthcare.co.uk; phone 07519119808

Fora Advanced blood glucose strips are available on prescription. They cost £9.25 for 50 strips and the PIP code is 409-3282. Fora Advanced blood ketone strips are available on prescription. They cost £9.25 for 10 strips and the PIP code is 409-3290. The lancets required are Omnican Lance Soft.

CareSens PRO blood glucose strips are available on prescription. They cost £9.95 for 50 strips and the PIP code is 403-4930. Ketosens blood ketone strips are available on prescription. They cost £9.95 for 10 strips and the PIP code is 403-4948. The lancets required are CareSens Lancets.

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