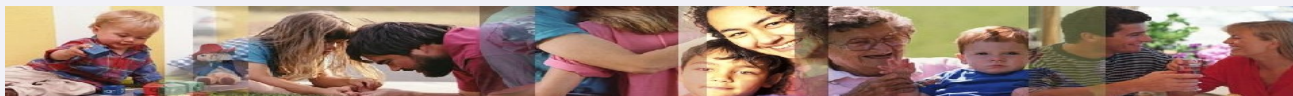


NEWSLETTER



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Naproxen EC to Plain Switch could save £0.6 million

Naproxen is available as both enteric coated (EC) tablets and plain tablets. There is limited evidence on the value of enteric-coating of NSAIDs. The BNF advises that using enteric coated NSAID preparations may only partially reduce symptoms, such as dyspepsia. Patients prescribed NSAIDs who are at risk of GI side effects should already be prescribed a PPI, therefore it is not necessary to prescribe an enteric coated formulation.

The cost of enteric coated naproxen is significantly more than the plain formulation:

Naproxen Dose	Cost of Plain tablets (28 days)*	Cost of Enteric coated tablets (28 days)*
250mg twice a day	£4.98	£7.64
500mg twice a day	£5.72	£15.08
375mg twice a day	N/A	£27.77
*November 2020 Drug Tariff		

If all patients in Northern Ireland currently prescribed naproxen EC were switched to naproxen plain, this would generate savings of £0.6 million for the Health Service.

Actions:

- Review all patients prescribed naproxen EC and if it is appropriate to continue treatment switch to naproxen plain.
- Set an alert on the GP clinical system to highlight that naproxen plain is the cost effective formulation.
- Community pharmacists are asked to reassure patients who have been switched to naproxen plain that there is no difference in efficacy of the drug or increase in side effects.
- Consider switching patients from naproxen 375mg twice a day to 250mg twice a day if appropriate.

FreeStyle Libre 2[®] Sensor

FreeStyle Libre 1[®], a flash glucose monitoring (FGM) system which can be used to aid the management of diabetes, became available on the Northern Ireland Drug Tariff on 1st November 2017.

A new version of the sensor, FreeStyle Libre 2[®], has recently been released by the manufacturers and is available on the Northern Ireland Drug Tariff from 1st November 2020.

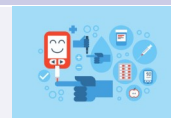
Key points:

- FreeStyle Libre 2[®] is very similar to FreeStyle Libre 1[®], but has additional and optional alarm functions, e.g. to alert for hypoglycaemia or hyperglycaemia.
- FreeStyle Libre 2[®] has an algorithm update, improving accuracy.
- FreeStyle Libre 2[®] sensors are the same cost as FreeStyle Libre 1[®] sensors.
- Stocks of FreeStyle Libre 2[®] won't be widely available until January 2021.
- When stocks are available, new patients (who are eligible under the [current pathway](#)) will be commenced on FreeStyle Libre 2[®].
- Existing patients (using the FreeStyle Libre 1[®] device) will gradually be transferred to the new device, FreeStyle Libre 2[®], at their next routine appointment.
- Further information on when stocks become available, how community pharmacists can order supplies and how existing patients will be changed to FreeStyle Libre 2[®] will be circulated to GPs and community pharmacists when available.

Safety Lancets

There are several different types of lancets:

- **Regular lancets** are loaded into a suitable lancing device (which usually comes free with the patient's glucometer) and disposed of in a sharps bin after a single use.
- **Safety lancets** ('safer sharps') do not require a lancing or finger pricking device and are designed to retract after use to prevent needle stick injuries to healthcare professionals using them. **They are not necessary for self-testing.** The two most commonly prescribed safety lancets are Unistik 3 Comfort[®] lancets and GlucoRx safety[®] lancets. **Safety lancets are almost twice as expensive as regular lancets.**



Actions:

Search for patients prescribed Unistik 3 Comfort[®] lancets or GlucoRx safety[®] lancets:

- If the patient is in a nursing home, and the lancets are being used to protect their staff, then the home should be advised to purchase their own supply. (*Depending on Covid pressures locally in some nursing homes, it may be more appropriate to address this with the care home at a later date, however no new nursing home patients should be commenced on safety lancets*).
- If the patient is being visited by their district nurse for administration of insulin and blood glucose monitoring, then the district nurse should be advised to order their own supply via stock.
 - ⇒ When the new supply arrangement is in place, the practice should stop prescribing safety lancets. If the patient requires a prescription for regular lancets the practice should arrange this, but it will be necessary to first establish if the patient has a lancing device (see below for further details).
- If the safety lancets are being used by the patient themselves, the patient/carer should be contacted by phone to establish if they have a lancing device at home:
 - ⇒ If the answer is yes, depending on which type of lancing device they have, a prescription for the appropriate lancets should be issued. The 30 gauge size lancets are suitable for most patients. Refer to the glucometer guideline on [NI Formulary website](#) which shows which lancing device comes with which glucometer and the type of lancets which fit the device.
 - ⇒ If the answer is no, the patient should be encouraged to contact their glucometer company's customer service help line to order a lancing device. When they receive it, the patient should be advised to contact the practice to order a prescription for the relevant brand of lancets.
- Community pharmacists are asked to provide advice and reassurance to patients who have been switched from safety lancets to regular lancets.

Building the Community-Pharmacy Partnership (BCPP) Programme

The next round of BCPP funding is now open. The number of sessions and the number of participants have been reduced and planning/training has been increased in light of COVID-19. We are encouraging participants to hold their projects using Zoom where possible. You can download a pack [here](#). Closing date is 3rd Dec 2020. If you would like to discuss with a member of the BCPP team, please email bcpp@cdhn.org.



NICE GUIDANCE — NI SERVICE NOTIFICATIONS

Service Notifications have been issued in Northern Ireland for the following:

[NICE TA622](#) — Sotagliflozin with insulin for treating type 1 diabetes

NOT RECOMMENDED:

[NICE TA650](#) — Pembrolizumab with axitinib for untreated advanced renal cell carcinoma.

MANAGED ENTRY DECISIONS

- Naldemedine (Rizmoic[®])
- Meropenem + vaborbactam (Vaborem[®])
- Budesonide orodispersible tablet (Jorveza[®])
- Osimertinib (Tagrisso[®])
- Caplacizumab (Cabliivi[®])

For full details see [Managed Entry section](#) of NI Formulary website.

This newsletter has been produced for GPs and pharmacists by the Regional Pharmacy and Medicines Management Team. If you have any queries or require further information on the contents of this newsletter, please contact one of the Pharmacy

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