

NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICINES MANAGEMENT Newsletter

Volume 15 Issue 12

December 2024

NI Management of Infection Guidelines for Primary Care now hosted on Eolas Medical

The *NI Management of Infection Guidelines for Primary Care* transitioned host platform from Microguide to [Eolas Medical](#) on 12 December 2024. The guideline is now available to access both as desktop and via an App.



For desktop access, click Login at the following link: [Eolas Medical](#). Initial login to Eolas Medical will require you to create an account and enter details for the first time.

An App is also available to download on your device by searching for '[Eolas Medical](#)' and then scan the QR code to get access to your Space.



To ensure information is accessible to users, the [Northern Ireland Formulary](#) and [Primary Care Intranet](#) hyperlinks have been updated to direct you to the guideline without the need to create an Eolas Medical account.

In addition to the [NI Management of Infection Guidelines for Primary Care](#), Eolas Medical will host other resources which you will have access to, including NICE Guidelines, BNF, BNFC and SmPCs. These resources will be available on the Eolas App (available on web/desktop) and mobile App with offline functionality.

If you require assistance getting access email support@eolasmedical.com. A [Setting up Eolas account guide](#) has been added to the primary care intranet.

Please note the Microguide platform will be closed down for all accounts on 20 December 2024 and will no longer be accessible via desktop or App.

In this issue



[Image by jcomp on Freepik](#)

- NI Management of Infection Guidelines for Primary Care now hosted on Eolas Medical Platform
- Updates to NI Management of Infection Guidelines for Primary care
- Management of conjunctivitis in community pharmacy for contact lens wearing patients
- Deprescribe: vitamins
- Deprescribing – Prescribe Self-Care

Updates to NI Management of Infection Guidelines for Primary Care

There have been a number of recent updates to the NI Management of Infection Guidelines for Primary Care.

Two new sections have been added:

1) Accessing treatment of *Clostridioides difficile* (CDI) in primary care

[NICE](#) recommends vancomycin 125mg orally four times a day for 10 days as the first-line antibiotic for treatment of *C. difficile* infection or fidaxomicin 200mg orally twice a day for 10 days as a second line option. **It is important that treatment is started without delay ideally the same day or within 24 hours.** Vancomycin and fidaxomicin may not routinely be available in community pharmacy. However, with advance warning the pharmacy may be able to obtain necessary supply on the same day. Information is now included in the NI Management of Infection Guidelines for Primary Care to outline the appropriate routes for obtaining antimicrobials for the treatment CDI when presenting in primary care.

2) *Pertussis*

(to be published in Jan 2025)

Updates to current sections:

- *Community acquired pneumonia*
- *Sexually transmitted infections*
- *Conjunctivitis*

Full details are available on the [NI Formulary website](#) and Eolas App.



NICE Guidance Recently published:

- [NICE TA989](#)
- [NICE TA1003](#)
- [NICE TA1014](#)
- [NICE TA1016](#)
- [NICE TA1017](#)
- [NICE TA1019](#)
- [NICE TA1020](#)

Managed Entry Decisions

Full details [here](#)

- Latanoprost–netarsudil eye drops (Roclanda[®])
- Rezafungin (Rezzayo[®])
- Rufinamide (Inovelon[®])
- Iptacopan (Fabhalta[®])
- Futibatinib (Lytgobi[®])
- Rucaparib (Rubraca[®])
- Danicopan (Voydeya[®])
- Quizartinib (Vanflyta[®])
- Crovalimab (Piasky[®])

Management of conjunctivitis in community pharmacy for contact lens wearing patients

Image by rawpixel.com on Freepik



Contact lens wearing patients presenting to community pharmacy with ocular symptoms, including conjunctivitis, should be **referred to their optometrist or GP**.

Contact lens use should be stopped immediately and be avoided until all symptoms of the infection have gone.

Contact lens wear associated eye infections could mimic conjunctivitis in early stages but have the potential to be sight threatening, e.g. microbial or acanthamoeba keratitis. Do not direct contact lens wearers to self-care or purchase OTC antibiotics, e.g. chloramphenicol; this may mask serious infection and result in condition not being treated appropriately for at least 5 to 7 days. A delay in the clinical diagnosis and appropriate treatment may result in potential hospitalisation, surgical intervention and long-term visual impairment.

[NICE CKS](#) and [Royal College of Optometrists](#) advise that contact lens wearers with a **diagnosis** of bacterial conjunctivitis should be treated with a topical antibiotic effective against Gram-negative organisms, such as an aminoglycoside (e.g. gentamycin) or a quinolone (e.g. levofloxacin or moxifloxacin). In addition, patients will be advised to undertake regular bathing/cleaning of the eyelids with cotton wool soaked in sterile saline or boiled and cooled water to remove any discharge and to seek further help if symptoms persist.

The [NI Management of Infection Guidelines for Primary Care](#) have been updated to reflect this guidance.

Deprescribe: vitamins

In Northern Ireland from Oct 2023 to Sep 2024, £1.8 million was spent on vitamin products for adults (excluding vitamin D). As vitamin and minerals are considered nutritional products, they must be approved by the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS) in order to be prescribed on HS21.

ACBS recommends that vitamin and mineral products should be prescribed *only in the management of actual or potential vitamin or mineral deficiency; not to be prescribed as dietary supplements or "pick-me-ups"*.

Vitamin and mineral preparations should **only** be prescribed on HS21 where a patient has a clinical or ACBS indication.

In the absence of a clinical or ACBS indication, but where a patient's condition may benefit from vitamin or mineral supplementation, patients should be advised that they can purchase vitamin and mineral supplements from community pharmacies.

Actions for Healthcare Professionals:

- **Promote a healthy diet:** encourage patients to obtain necessary vitamins and minerals through a balanced and varied diet. Resources such as the PHA [Enjoy Healthy Eating](#) leaflet and the [Balanced Diet Vimeo series](#) have been developed to support patient education on dietary health.
- **Direct patients to over-the-counter options:** patients seeking vitamins for general wellness or as a "pick-me-up" should be advised to purchase these products. Community pharmacies can provide guidance on selecting suitable options for those seeking dietary supplements.
- **Refer to the Healthy Start scheme:** for eligible women and children, please refer to the [Healthy Start scheme](#), which provides free vitamins by post. This program remains a valuable resource for supporting those in need without impacting prescribing budgets.

Deprescribing – Prescribe Self-Care

Most common winter illnesses such as cough, sore throat or sinusitis can be treated with over-the-counter medications and self-care advice. [TARGET](#) leaflets which include safety netting information that can be sent to patients via text message to support self-care, are available.



This newsletter has been produced for GP practices and community pharmacies by the DoH Strategic Planning and Performance Group Regional Pharmacy and Medicines Management Team. If you have any queries or require further information on the contents, please contact one of the [Pharmacy Advisers](#).

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information included in this newsletter is correct at the time of publication. Throughout the newsletter, external links are provided to other sites. These links are provided to improve access to information and exist only for the convenience of readers of the Newsletter; SPPG cannot accept responsibility for their content. The SPPG does not necessarily endorse the views expressed within these external websites. We cannot guarantee that these links will work all of the time and we have no control over the availability of the linked pages. This newsletter is not to be used for commercial purposes.

Wishing everyone a Happy and Healthy Christmas and New Year

