

NEWSLETTER



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LATEST COST-EFFECTIVE CHOICES

The following will be included within the list of Cost-Effective Choices (CECs) for primary care in Northern Ireland from 5th September 2016:

Product	Potential annual savings for NI NHS	Cost-Effective Choice
Galantamine prolonged release capsules	£270,000	Gatalin XL[®]
Buprenorphine patches (5, 10, 20 micrograms/hr, 7 day patches)	£570,000	Butec[®]
Oxycodone immediate release capsules	£200,000	Shortec[®]

These medicines should be prescribed by brand name in order to obtain the savings.

Action for GPs

- **New patients** should be commenced on the cost-effective choices when these drugs are indicated.
- **Existing patients** currently prescribed alternative galantamine prolonged release capsules, buprenorphine 7 day patches or oxycodone immediate release capsules should be considered for switching to the cost-effective choices where appropriate.
- Particular care should be taken when switching products to ensure that prescribing records are updated appropriately to avoid duplication of therapy.
- GP practices should provide their local community pharmacists with sufficient notice of their intention to move patients to the cost-effective choices to allow them to adjust their stock levels.
- GPs are encouraged to consider switching suitable patients to the cost-effective choices under the Northern Ireland Prescribing Support LES, if applicable.

Action for Community Pharmacists

- Clinical checks should ensure there is no duplication of therapy.
- Patients should be reassured that their medication has not changed and that prescribing of cost-effective choices will ensure continuity of product, minimising patient confusion.

The latest cost effective choices list and support tools are available to view on the [NI Formulary](#) website.

WIPE OUT MEDICINE WASTE

Every year in Northern Ireland, £18,000,000 is thrown away as unwanted medicines. The Wipe Out Medicine Waste video is part of a campaign to raise awareness of the amount of medicines wasted annually in Northern Ireland and to encourage people to help reduce this, by checking their stock before re-ordering and to let their doctor or pharmacist know if they think they are getting too much.

The Wipe Out Medicine Waste video is available to download from the HSCB Vimeo account - <https://vimeo.com/149623414>



Action

- GP practices may wish to link to the video on their websites, or set up rolling programmes on screens in their waiting areas.
- More information about medicine waste can be found here: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/prescriptions-advice>

CAUTION: INTERACTIONS WITH GABAPENTINOIDS

Nearly half a million prescription items were dispensed in Northern Ireland in 2015 for gabapentinoids (gabapentin and pregabalin). With such widespread use, the potential for drug interactions with other medicines should be considered. If more than one central nervous system (CNS) depressant is taken (e.g. alcohol even in small amounts, antidepressants, anti-emetics, anti-epileptics, antihistamines, antipsychotics, anxiolytics, barbiturates, hypnotics, opioid analgesics, skeletal muscle relaxants), the CNS depressant effects may be additive. Additionally, morphine can increase the bioavailability of gabapentin. Caution is therefore needed when these drugs are co-prescribed, and the doses of both drugs may need to be modified. Similarly, pregabalin appears to be additive in the impairment of cognitive and gross motor function caused by oxycodone.



NICE GUIDANCE — NORTHERN IRELAND SERVICE NOTIFICATIONS

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

[NICE TA23](#) — Temozolomide for the treatment of recurrent malignant glioma (update)

MANAGED ENTRY DECISIONS

No medicines were considered this month as part of the Northern Ireland Managed Entry process. **Please refer to the Managed Entry section of the Northern Ireland Formulary website for details on previous Managed Entry decisions:** <http://niformulary.hscni.net/ManagedEntry/MEDecisions/Pages/default.aspx>

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 Advisors in your local HSCB office.

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References

1. Public Health England. Advice for prescribers on the risk of the misuse of pregabalin and gabapentin, 2014. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/385791/PHE-NHS_England_pregabalin_and_gabapentin_advice_Dec_2014.pdf
2. BSO. Prescription Cost Analysis Northern Ireland, 2015. <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1806.htm>

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