

## NEWSLETTER



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## COMPETACT<sup>®</sup> — PRESCRIBE AS INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Competact<sup>®</sup> is a combination product, comprising **pioglitazone 15mg + metformin 850mg**, with one tablet taken twice daily. As with all combination products, there is inflexibility of dose titration for the individual components.

The Northern Ireland Formulary (<http://niformulary.hscni.net/Pages/default.aspx>) states that Competact<sup>®</sup> may be prescribed for patients on metformin who require pioglitazone due to a sulfonylurea not being an appropriate choice **but should be reserved for patients with demonstrable compliance problems.**

There is a large difference in the cost of Competact<sup>®</sup> compared to the individual generic components:

Drug	Cost / 28 days	Annual difference
*Competact <sup>®</sup>	<b>£35.89</b>	<b>£421.33 SAVED</b> per patient switched to individual generic components
Pioglitazone 30mg	One daily £1.57	
Metformin 850mg	One twice daily £1.91	

\* the patent on Competact<sup>®</sup> is not due to expire until 2021. Hence even prescriptions written as "pioglitazone 15mg + metformin 850mg" can only be supplied with Competact<sup>®</sup> until this patent expires.

Note: It is cheaper to prescribe pioglitazone 30mg od than pioglitazone 15mg bd (£1.57 vs £2.64 for 28 days) and it is usual to prescribe pioglitazone once daily.

**Applied across Northern Ireland, 70% uptake of this switch to individual generic components could generate efficiency savings of £200,000 per annum.**

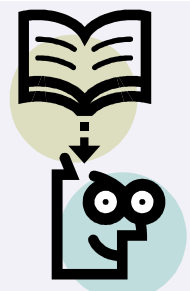
### Action

- Review all patients prescribed Competact<sup>®</sup> or as the combination generic product (pioglitazone + metformin) with a view to changing to individual generic components, where appropriate.
- Remember to communicate clearly with patients and carers regarding any modifications to medication.

## LEARNING MODULE ON STEROIDS

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has launched an online learning module on reducing the side effects of steroid medicines. The module is intended to help clinicians to optimise the use of corticosteroids. The module can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regulator-launches-learning-module-on-steroids>

The corticosteroid learning module is approved for continuing professional development (CPD) by the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Medicine of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom.



## RISK OF ABNORMAL PREGNANCY OUTCOMES WITH VALPROATE

In January 2015, MHRA Drug Safety Update advised health care professionals about important new information and strengthened warnings related to safety of medicines related to valproate (sodium valproate, valproic acid [brand leader: Epilim<sup>®</sup>] and valproate semi-sodium [brand leader: Depakote<sup>®</sup>]). Full details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/medicines-related-to-valproate-risk-of-abnormal-pregnancy-outcomes?fromsource=nelm>

Children exposed in utero to valproate are at a high risk of:

- serious developmental disorders (in up to 30-40% of cases) and / or
- congenital malformations (in approximately 10% of cases)

Valproate should not be prescribed to female children, female adolescents, women of childbearing potential or pregnant women unless other treatments are ineffective or not tolerated



### Action

Search for female **children, adolescents and women of child-bearing age** who are currently prescribed valproate. These patients should be invited for review to ensure that they are informed of and understand the issues associated with valproate prescribing.

## NEW NICE GUIDANCE

[NICE Clinical Guideline CG37 - Postnatal care – Addendum](#)

[NICE Clinical Guideline CG131 - Colorectal cancer: The diagnosis and management of colorectal cancer - Addendum](#)

[NICE Clinical Guideline CG190 - Intrapartum care: care of healthy women and their babies during childbirth](#)

[NICE Clinical Guideline CG191 - Pneumonia: Diagnosis and management of community- and hospital-acquired pneumonia in adults](#)

[NICE TA 320 Dimethyl fumarate for treating relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis](#)

[NICE TA 322 Lenalidomide for treating myelodysplastic syndromes associated with an isolated deletion 5q cytogenetic abnormality](#)

## MANAGED ENTRY DECISIONS

The following medicines were considered in January as part of the Northern Ireland Managed Entry process. **For details of the outcomes please refer to the Managed Entry section of the Northern Ireland Formulary website:** <http://niformulary.hscni.net/ManagedEntry/MEDecisions/Pages/default.aspx>

### Primary and Secondary Care

- Brimonidine gel (Mirvaso<sup>®</sup>)
- Empagliflozin (Jardiance<sup>®</sup>)
- Olodaterol Respimat (Striverdi Respimat<sup>®</sup>)

### Secondary Care

- Axitinib (Inlyta<sup>®</sup>)
- Dolutegravir, abacavir, lamivudine (Triumeq<sup>®</sup>)
- Idelalisib (Zydelig<sup>®</sup>)
- Infliximab, adalimumab and golimumab
- Riociguat (Adempas<sup>®</sup>)

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 Medicines Management pharmacists in your local HSCB office.

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### References

- 1) MHRA. Medicines related to valproate: risk of abnormal pregnancy outcomes. Drug Safety Update, Jan 2015
- 2) NI Formulary <http://niformulary.hscni.net/formulary/adult/Pages/default.aspx>
- 3) BSO Pricing Book (November 2014)
- 4) UKMi Patents Database Online <http://www.ukmi.nhs.uk>

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