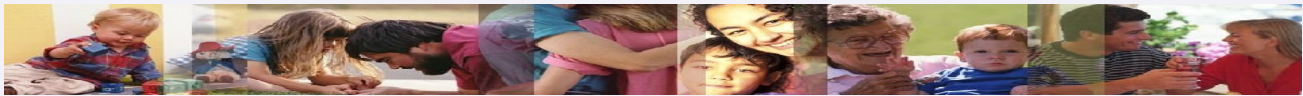


NEWSLETTER

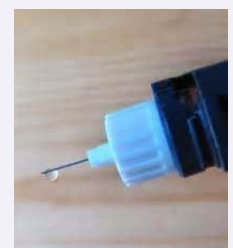


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NEEDLES FOR SELF-ADMINISTERING INSULIN USING PENS

Over £1.2million is spent annually in Northern Ireland on needles which are suitable for the self-administration of insulin and GLP-1 agonists (Victoza[®], Byetta[®], Lyxumia[®]) using pen devices. These vary in price from £5.94 to £13.02 for 100 needles. **If all NI patients who currently use these needles were changed to the less expensive (<£6/100) needles, over £500,000 could be saved annually.**



Action for GPs, nurses and community pharmacists

- If you are switching needles, please ensure that you do not accidentally select a longer needle.
- Usual needle lengths are 4mm, 5mm or 6mm (there is no clinical reason for recommending needles longer than 6mm to use with insulin pens and longer needles increase the risk of inadvertent IM injection of insulin). The healthcare professional who initiated the insulin should be able to answer any queries about most appropriate needle length. For further information on insulin injection technique including needle length see <http://www.fit4diabetes.com/united-kingdom/>
- A patient information leaflet (PIL) on insulin needles is in development and will be available shortly on the [Primary Care intranet](#).
- Practice nurses are asked to review needles at the patients' next diabetic review appointment.
- Patients should be reassured that changing back to the previously used needles is an option for individuals who are dissatisfied with their new needles.

The following needles can be used on all major brands of insulin pen devices, currently cost less than £6 for 100 needles:

Omnican fine[®]
Microdot droplet[®]
Tricare[®]
GlucorxFinePoint[®]
MyLife Penfine Classic[®]
Glucoject[®]
Insupen[®]

The NI Diabetes Nurse Study group has been consulted on this article.

FEXOFENADINE: NOT THE NI FORMULARY CHOICE

Oral antihistamines are primarily used for the relief of allergies such as hayfever and for chronic idiopathic urticaria. The Northern Ireland Formulary <http://niformulary.hscni.net> recommends cetirizine (non-sedating) or chlorphenamine (sedating) as first-line antihistamine choices, with loratidine (non-sedating) as a second choice.



Analysis of primary care prescribing data showed that almost 23,000 prescriptions were issued in June to August 2015 for fexofenadine. Fexofenadine is a non-sedating antihistamine and is considerably more expensive than either the 1st or 2nd NI Formulary choices for non-sedating antihistamines (see table below).

Action for GPs

- Fexofenadine should not to be prescribed first or second line when an antihistamine is clinically indicated.
- Review patients who are being prescribed fexofenadine on "repeat"; review on-going appropriateness and consider a potential change to a NI Formulary choice if appropriate.

Drug	Strength	Price (30)
Cetirizine	10mg	£1.05
Loratadine	10mg	£1.07
Fexofenadine	120mg	£3.50
Fexofenadine	180mg	£4.87

REVIEW: 'CALCIUM & ERGOCACIFEROL TABLETS'

Preparations containing calcium with vitamin D (colecalfiferol or ergocalciferol) are available for the management of combined calcium and vitamin D deficiency or in the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis.

Current options in the NI Formulary for the management of osteoporosis include Natecal D3[®] and Adcal D3[®] (calcium and colecalciferol).

Prescribing data indicates that there is some prescribing of 'calcium & ergocalciferol' tablets. This product is significantly more expensive and contains a lower amount of calcium, and therefore would not be a first line option. Ergocalciferol may however be preferred in vegans as colecalciferol is derived from animal sources.

Product	Calcium	Vitamin D	Price
'Calcium & ergocalciferol' tablets	2.4mmol	400 units	£14.32 x 28
Natecal D3 [®]	15mmol	400 units	£1.70 x 28
Adcal D3 [®]	15mmol	400 units	£1.83 x 28

Action

- Patients who are prescribed 'calcium & ergocalciferol tablets' on repeat for osteoporosis should be reviewed to see if Natecal D3[®] or Adcal D3[®] could be used instead.
- Avoid writing prescriptions as simply "calcium and vitamin D" - brand name or strength should be specified.
- Community pharmacists are asked to contact prescribers to verify intention if prescription is written as simply "calcium and vitamin D".
- Please refer to Cost Effective Choices newsletters for other examples of potential efficiencies:
<http://niformulary.hscni.net/PrescribingNewsletters/CEC/Pages/default.aspx>

NEW NICE GUIDANCE

Service Notifications issued in Northern Ireland for the following:

[NICE TA 345](#): Naloxegol for treating opioid-induced constipation

[NICE TA 347](#): Nintedanib for previously treated locally advanced, metastatic, or locally recurrent non-small-cell lung cancer

[NICE TA 349](#): Dexamethasone intravitreal implant for treating diabetic macular oedema

NOT RECOMMENDED:

[NICE TA 360](#): Paclitaxel as albumin-bound nanoparticles in combination with gemcitabine for previously untreated metastatic pancreatic cancer.

MANAGED ENTRY DECISIONS

The following medicines were considered in November 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

- Budesonide (Cortiment[®])
- Midodrine hydrochloride (Bramox[®])
- Travoprost (Travatan[®])
- Vortioxetine (Brintellix[®])

Secondary Care

- Darunavir + cobicistat (Rezolsta[®])
- Eribulin (Halaven[®])

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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- 2) BMA / RPSGB. BNF 70, Sep 2015—March 2016.
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<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2034.htm>
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