

Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Guidance

Issue: 21

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1. Nutrition product : Similac Alimentum has changed its name to Alimentum.

Alimentum, formerly Similac Alimentum, is an extensively hydrolysed (EH) formula for infants with mild-to-moderate cow's milk allergy (CMA) or other conditions where an EH formula is indicated. Prescribers will now need to search for Alimentum in prescribing systems.

Please do not mistake for Similac High Energy, this is a different product for infants with faltering growth. Abbott has changed the name to Alimentum as part of a formulation upgrade which is expected to come into the market from July 2020.

2. General nutritional advice for patients post- COVID-19

Reliable nutrition information written by NHS health care professionals has been produced for patients to access via webinars or printable handouts. These include vitamin D fact sheets, nourishing drink recipes and many nutrition-related topics, alongside a 27 minute webinar for patients on "managing malnutrition". Accessed via [link to patient webinar](#)

3. MHRA: Evidence of harm from illicit or fake benzodiazepines ([Link](#))

This Public Health England safety alert advises of the availability of, and harm from, illicit drugs sold as benzodiazepines, which are increasingly reported to be causing hospitalisations and deaths in the UK. The products may contain high-potency benzodiazepines or analogues, or other dangerous substances.

4. CQC: The safer management of controlled drugs ([Link](#))

CQC's annual update report for 2019 (see link) makes three recommendations for improvement based on their analysis of the data on prescribing in NHS primary care services, issues raised at controlled drug local intelligence networks (CDLNs) and CQC's wider inspection and regulatory work.

- Reviewing patients' clinical needs before prescribing.
- Putting in place local arrangements for rapid mobilisation of medicines for end of life care.
- Considering the needs of patients and carers on an individual basis.

5. Press release: Millions could be vaccinated against Covid-19 as UK secures strong portfolio of promising vaccines ([Link](#))

The UK has secured early access to 90 million vaccine doses from the BioNTech/Pfizer alliance and Valneva as part of its vaccination strategy. It has also secured treatments containing Covid-19-neutralising antibodies from AstraZeneca to protect those who cannot receive vaccines.

6. Press release: Most comprehensive flu programme in UK history will be rolled out this winter ([Link](#))

The government has announced expansion of the flu vaccination programme to include people aged 50-64 (this will commence later in the season), people on the shielded list and their household contacts, and those in the first year of secondary school (year 7).

7. Enalapril supply problem ([Link](#))

All suppliers of enalapril 20mg tablets are out of stock until early August 2020. Alternate strengths of enalapril (2.5mg, 5mg and 10mg) tablets remain available and will be able to support increased demand. Unlicensed supplies of enalapril 20mg tablets can be sourced. Where patients have insufficient supplies to last until the re-supply date, please work with local pharmacy teams to understand availability of alternative strengths and issue a prescription to make up the required dose of enalapril. Alternatively you may wish to consider prescribing unlicensed imports, if supplies of enalapril tablets are unavailable.

8. “Greener” Respimat reusable devices

The Respimat inhalation devices (Spiriva and Spiolto) may now be prescribed and dispensed with the potential to re-use the device, with refill cartridges. The inhaler device may be used up to six times with refill cartridges rather than six disposable inhalers, each containing one cartridge. This leads to significant reductions in carbon footprint and is convenient for patients. Cartridges are now available separately on prescription without the device. A new device (with cartridge) is recommended every 6 months. For further information on Respimat reusable see [Link](#)