

Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Guidance

Issue: 29

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1. MHRA guidance: Warfarin and other anticoagulants – monitoring of patients during the COVID-19 pandemic ([Link](#))

During the COVID-19 pandemic, reports of elevated INRs have been received. This MHRA document suggests possible reasons for this, the importance of ongoing INR monitoring, advice for professionals and advice for patients. Healthcare professionals are reminded that acute illness may exaggerate the effect of warfarin tablets and necessitate a dose reduction. Patients should be informed of the need to let their GP and healthcare team know if they have symptoms of or confirmed COVID-19 infection, because it is important that they continue to have their INR monitored while they are ill. They should be reminded to report in any changes to their diet (including alcohol consumption), smoking habits, any new medicines or supplements they are taking, and of the need to carefully follow the instructions for use for anticoagulant medication. Additionally patients should report in if they are ill with sickness or diarrhoea or have lost their appetite, or are unable to attend their next scheduled blood test for any reason, including because they feel unwell.

Practices and healthcare professionals who monitor INRs should consider how they will inform patients of the key messages in the guidance.

2. SPS Advice: How can people who need thickened fluids take medicines? ([Link](#))

This Medicines Q&A outlines options available for oral administration of medicines for people who need thickened fluids, describing advantages and disadvantages of each and points to consider. The most appropriate option must be made on an individual patient basis.

3. SPS Advice: Thickening agents and thickened fluids: do they interact with medicines? ([Link](#))

This Medicines Q&A looks at drug interactions between solid oral dosage forms and thickened fluids, and at drug interactions between liquid oral medicines and

thickening agents when prepared as a single dose immediately prior to administration.

4. SCAN (South Central Antimicrobial Network) guidelines update

Version 2.1(October 2020) of the SCAN guidelines have now been published. The changes to version 2.1 are as follows;

- Formatting in the genital tract condition section
- Oral candidiasis and animal bites pages updated
- Standardisation of C. diff risk phrasing
- Analgesia statement added to paediatric tonsillitis and otitis media sections
- Antimicrobial alerts folder created and Fluoroquinolones MHRA alert added (this alert used to be on landing page for pdf version of guidelines)

SCAN Antibiotic Guidelines PDF landing page will also be updated soon. Please see previous bulletin 24 for information on how to download the app. Guidance is also available via the SCAN website. ([Link](#))

5. Immunisations

Please see Public Health England's vaccine update regarding flu vaccinations ([Link](#)). This update provides guidance and resources for practice staff.

Practical and clinical advice on vaccine administration is available on the Royal College of Nursing Website ([Link](#)). This includes guidance on administration, observation time and cold chain advice.

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Previous bulletins can be found at:

www.westhampshireccq.nhs.uk/medicines-optimisation/covid-19-medicines-information/covid-19-medicines-optimisation-bulletins