

# Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Guidance

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## 1. Priadel (Lithium) Update ([Link](#))

Essential Pharma has offered formal commitments to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) regarding its strategy in relation to Priadel. These proposed commitments would last for 5 years and include continuing to supply Priadel on terms agreed with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). It would mean that the company cannot threaten to withdraw Priadel in order to increase the price without good reason.

The CMA's preliminary view is that the proposed commitments meet its competition concerns and is now seeking views from others before accepting them formally. If accepted, the commitments will bring the investigation to an end.

The investigation by the CMA is ongoing and no decision has been made as to whether the law has been broken. However, if the commitments are accepted by the CMA, they will become legally binding, which means Essential Pharma cannot choose to retract them.

More information can be found on the CMA's investigation into supply of lithium-based medication case page ([Link](#)).

## 2. NICE Guidelines: Acute coronary syndromes (NG185) 18 November 2020. ([Link](#))

This guideline covers the early and longer-term (rehabilitation) management of acute coronary syndromes. These include ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), non-ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (NSTEMI) and unstable angina. The guideline aims to improve survival and quality of life for people who have a heart attack or unstable angina.

**3. COVID-19 rapid guideline: reducing the risk of venous thromboembolism in over 16s with COVID-19 (NG186). 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020. ([Link](#))**

This guideline covers pharmacological VTE prophylaxis for patients being treated for COVID-19 pneumonia. It includes patients receiving treatment in hospital or in a community setting such as a 'hospital at home' service or COVID-19 'virtual ward'. The guideline applies to all patients with COVID-19 pneumonia, including those who have other conditions.

**4. MHRA Drug Safety Update: Bupropion (Zyban): risk of serotonin syndrome with use with other serotonergic drugs. 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 ([Link](#))**

Cases of serotonin syndrome have been identified in associated with bupropion, especially in overdose or when bupropion is administered with other drugs with a serotonergic effect such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and serotonin norepinephrine re-uptake inhibitors (SNRI).

Advice to healthcare professionals is if concomitant prescribing with other serotonergic drugs is clinically warranted:

- do not exceed the recommended dose
- remind patients of the milder symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea or increased heart rate and agitation (see full list in the link above) of serotonin syndrome at initiation of treatment and at any change of dose and the importance of seeking medical advice if they occur
- if serotonin syndrome is suspected, either decrease the dose of bupropion or withdraw therapy depending on the severity of the symptoms

Advice to patients is also included. Please read the safety update at the link above.

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*Previous bulletins can be found at:*

<https://gp-portal.westhampshireccq.nhs.uk/medicines/covid-19-medicines-information/covid-19-medicines-optimisation-bulletins/>