

Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Guidance

Issue: 46

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1. SCAN guidelines update, including chloramphenicol eye drops contraindicated in children under 2 years ([Link](#))

The South Central Antibiotic Network (SCAN) guidelines have been updated with some major changes in April and May:

- Paediatric conjunctivitis update - Chloramphenicol eye drops contraindicated in children under 2 years old. ([Link](#)) Update provided from Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) and Royal College of Ophthalmologists ([Link](#)).
- **New** information from EMA: boron or borates present in chloramphenicol eye drops could affect safety when used in children under 2 years old due to a potential effect on future fertility.
- New COVID-19 treatment folder including updates from NICE NG191 and the MHRA CAS alert: COVID-19 Therapeutic Alert - Inhaled Budesonide for Adults (50 Years and Over) with COVID-19 - **major** changes here ([Link](#))
- Lyme Disease page updated, **major** changes to page ([Link](#))

It is also worth reminding prescribers of the limitations of nitrofurantoin with moderate/severe reduction in renal function. Nitrofurantoin is contraindicated in most patients with an estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) of less than 45 ml/min/1.73m² ([link](#))

In addition to the SCAN website, the guidelines are available via an app. Instructions on how to download the Micro Guide (SCAN) App are available here. [LINK](#)

2. Valproate medicines and pregnancy prevention programme reminder ([Link](#))

The guide for healthcare professions on the Prevent programme (the valproate pregnancy prevention programme, aimed at minimising pregnancy exposure during treatment with valproate) was updated in November 2020 ([Link](#)). It is advisable to regularly run practice searches to ensure any new, applicable girls and women prescribed valproate are picked up and included in the Prevent programme.

How to implement Prevent: General practitioners

- Ensure continuous use of highly effective contraception in all women of childbearing potential (consider the need for pregnancy testing if not a highly effective method).
- Check that all patients have an up to date, signed, Annual Acknowledgment of Risk Form each time a repeat prescription is issued.
- Ensure the patient is referred back to the specialist for annual review.
- Refer to the specialist urgently (within days) in case of unplanned pregnancy or where a patient wants to plan a pregnancy.

3. NICE amends antiepileptic recommendations in guideline on diagnosis and management of epilepsies (CG137) 12th May 2021 ([Link](#))

NICE has reviewed and amended recommendations on carbamazepine, gabapentin, lamotrigine, levetiracetam, oxcarbazepine, phenobarbital, phenytoin, pregabalin, topiramate and zonisamide, in line with the MHRA updated safety advice on antiepileptics in pregnancy.

They have also amended recommendations in line with the MHRA guidance on valproate use by women and girls. Valproate must not be used in women and girls of childbearing potential (including young girls who are likely to need treatment into their childbearing years), unless other options are unsuitable and the pregnancy prevention programme is in place (as per item 2).

4. NICE amends recommendation on topiramate in guideline on diagnosis and management of headaches in over 12s (CG150). 12th May 2021 ([Link](#))

NICE has amended recommendation on topiramate for migraine prophylaxis to include discussion of the potential benefits and risks, and the importance of effective contraception for women and girls of childbearing potential when taking topiramate.

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Previous bulletins can be found at:

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

For COVID-19 vaccine related updates, please refer to the regular NHSE&I Primary Care Bulletins.
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