

Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Guidance

Issue: 47

Date: 26th May 2021

1. MHRA drug safety update: Levothyroxine: new prescribing advice for patients who experience symptoms on switching between different levothyroxine products. ([Link](#))

The MHRA has received reports of some patients experiencing adverse events on switching between levothyroxine tablet formulations. The advice for healthcare professionals is:

- generic prescribing of levothyroxine remains appropriate for the majority of patients and the licensing of these generic products is supported by bioequivalence testing
- a small proportion of patients treated with levothyroxine report symptoms, often consistent with thyroid dysfunction, when their levothyroxine tablets are changed to a different product – these cases are noted in [UK professional guidelines](#)
- if a patient reports symptoms after changing their levothyroxine product, consider testing thyroid function
- if a patient is persistently symptomatic after switching levothyroxine products, whether they are biochemically euthyroid or have evidence of abnormal thyroid function, consider consistently prescribing a specific levothyroxine product known to be well tolerated by the patient
- if symptoms or poor control of thyroid function persist despite adhering to a specific product, consider prescribing levothyroxine in an oral solution formulation.

2. Dexamethasone injection

Dexamethasone 4mg/ml injection was discontinued in 2014. It is now available as 3.3mg/ml or 3.8mg/ml injection (as dexamethasone base). The BNF advises to prescribe the dose of dexamethasone injection in units of dexamethasone base. Prescriptions should be written in doses that can be readily calculated, based on the available products. It is worth checking with community palliative care teams which strength is routinely used (and stocked by pharmacies offering a palliative care service) in your local area.

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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/>