

# Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Guidance

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Issue: 52

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## 1. SPS: Understanding safety risks with betamethasone soluble tablets used as mouthwash [LINK](#)

Betamethasone 500 microgram soluble tablets, prepared as a mouthwash, are used to treat recurrent aphthous ulceration (recurrent mouth ulcers). This use is off-label but is a recognised treatment. The BNF ([LINK](#)) recommends a dose for oral ulceration for adults and children (12 to 17 years) of 500 micrograms four times a day. The tablet should be dissolved in 20 mL water, rinsed around the mouth, and **not swallowed**.

The National Reporting & Learning System has received several reports related to betamethasone soluble tablets prescribed as mouthwash but mistakenly taken orally. One report described hospital admission for adrenal crisis. Providing clear patient directions can help prevent harm.

## 2. CQC: Annual update: The safer management of controlled drugs July 2021 [LINK](#)

The Care Quality Commission has recently published their annual report regarding safer management of controlled drugs. Various sections relevant to primary care are listed below and include the prescribing trends of various controlled drugs in 2020.

- [Harm associated with liquid opioids](#)
- [Guidance on prescribing for chronic pain](#)
- [Cannabis-based products for medicinal use](#)
- [Controlled drugs trends in primary care](#)

## 3. NICE: Clostridioides difficile infection: antimicrobial prescribing – guidance NG199 July 2021 [LINK](#)

This new guideline sets out an antimicrobial prescribing strategy for managing Clostridioides difficile infection in adults, young people and children aged 72 hours and over in community and hospital settings. It aims to optimise antibiotic use and reduce antibiotic resistance and includes a 2-page visual summary. The guideline contains recommendations on:

- [Assessment](#)
- [Treating suspected or confirmed C. difficile infection](#)

- [Advice](#)
- [Reassessment](#)
- [Referral](#)
- [Choice of antibiotic](#)
- [Preventing \*C. difficile\* infection](#)

#### **4. NICE: COVID-19 rapid guideline: vaccine-induced immune thrombocytopenia and thrombosis (VITT) July 2021 [LINK](#)**

This guideline was produced to support clinicians to diagnose and manage this newly recognised syndrome for which there is limited evidence available to inform clinical management. Identification and management of VITT is evolving quickly as the case definition becomes clearer.

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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/>*