

# Medicines Optimisation news headlines

April 2015

## “Tip of the month”

### Prescribe generic M/R venlafaxine in the TABLET form

There is still a small amount of prescribing of generic venlafaxine M/R capsules in virtually all practices across the CCG, costing an extra £63K a year. Venlafaxine tablet is the preferred generic form for modified release doses.

### Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) – Appropriate Prescribing Project Update

The dietetic project to help reduce inappropriate spend on ONS is still going strong. A price war has started thanks to two new companies manufacturing ONS. There is now a big difference in cost between similar products. If all ONS prescribed in the CCG were the lowest acquisition cost (at no effect on quality), £211,000 per year could be saved.

1. Before prescribing ONS always consider the Food First approach. Patients advice sheet can be found on the public CCG website [here](#)
2. If ONS are needed/requested, [here](#) are the options:
  - Powder to be mixed with full fat milk: **Aymes Shake** (18p cheaper per sachet than Complan)
  - Standard ready-made milkshake style ONS (lactose free): **Aymes Complete**
  - Compact milkshake type ONS (125mls): **Nutriplen**
  - Juice style ONS: **Fresubin Jucy**

Free direct-to-patients sample service is available so make full use of this before prescribing (see [formulary](#) for direct links to the companies offering this)

#### Non preferred ONS:

- 1Kcal/ml ONS are not calorie dense and better reserved for enteral feeding, therefore avoid **Ensure**, **Fresubin Original** and **Fortimel** unless a strong rationale is present.
- Crème and dessert type ONS can easily be replaced with over the counter yoghurts, mousses and individual desserts

Care Homes will soon have access to a clear food first strategy and should therefore need minimal amount of ONS

This approach has been developed in collaboration with prescribing support dietitians, Aude and Tina who are always available for advice.

Aude Cholet [a.cholet@nhs.net](mailto:a.cholet@nhs.net)

Tina Cheung [tina.cheung@hhft.nhs.uk](mailto:tina.cheung@hhft.nhs.uk)

Or call on: 01256 313232

## Focus on 'Specials' – Levothyroxine Special Order Products

Over the three months to February 2015, the CCG spent £4,400 on levothyroxine specials. Where possible a licensed product should be prescribed in preference to an unlicensed 'special'.

Levothyroxine Oral Solution*				
Strength	Qty supplied	Cost	Cost for 28 days supply at 5ml daily dose	Cost of 28 days supplied of equivalent strength tablets
25microgram in 5ml	100ml	£79.20	£110.88	<b>£2.95</b>
50microgram in 5ml	100ml	£89.01	£124.61	<b>£2.02</b>
100microgram in 5ml	100ml	£123.18	£172.45	<b>£2.02</b>
Based on the licensed product available (Amdipharm Mercury Company Ltd) - Drug Tariff prices April 15				Tariff prices April 15

If a liquid preparation is required the prescription needs to be written as:

**Levothyroxine sodium 100microgram/5ml oral solution sugar free.**

**(Also available as 25microgram and 50microgram in 5ml strengths)**

This should ensure that the licensed product is supplied, which has a shelf life of 18 months unopened, or 8 weeks once opened. If written differently to the above a special product will be supplied and costs, expiry dates, quality and clinical response may vary. See the [levothyroxine oral solution SPC](#) for more information.

Levothyroxine Capsules* - Special product			
Strength	Cost variance for 28 days supply	Average cost for 28 days supply	Cost of 28 days supplied of equivalent strength tablets
25micrograms	£28.47 - £159.35	£110.59	<b>£2.95</b>
50micrograms	£225.20 - £235.16	£230.18	<b>£2.02</b>
100micrograms	£28.47 - £159.56	£112.94	<b>£2.02</b>
Based on costs for individual products supplied as specials from ePACT data April 2015			Tariff prices April 15

\*Please ensure this formulation is required and switch to the licensed tablets where possible.

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